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MISSION FOCUS

Jesus' Friendship with Mary Magdalene

JANET M. BRENEMAN

Jesus was a friend of women! This is well established throughout the Gospels and is surprising in the context of the early New Testament era. Women had little place outside their houses, no voice in legal or religious matters, and certainly no business sustaining friendships with men, let alone one supposedly a rabbi. It seems these social and religious standards meant little to Jesus; he certainly didn't abide by them.

There are numerous examples of Jesus carrying on weighty conversations with women, teaching them, touching and healing them, visiting with them in their homes, being entertained and ministered to by them, even including women in his traveling band of disciple-followers. Perhaps one of the most surprising relationships of all is with Mary from the town of Magdala in Galilee. The information about Mary Magdalene's background is sparse. In Matthew, Mark, and John we hear nothing of her until the crucifixion and resurrection accounts. Luke tells us that she was one of those who accompanied Jesus as "he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities ... [including] Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means" (Luke 8:1-3, RSV).

This Mary of Magdala is not to be confused with the other Marys of Jesus' acquaintance. This Mary is from the city Magdala, along the west edge of the Sea of Galilee. Magdala seems to have been a fairly well-to-do city, with commerce of fishing, fish-curing, shipbuilding, and agriculture. It is not known when, where, or under what circumstances Jesus met Mary, nor whether he visited her town, though he certainly frequented the area round about.

The most clear characteristic about Mary Magdalene is that she is the one "from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:2). What kind of physical or demented condition would the reference to seven demons have indicated in Jesus' era and social setting? Perhaps she was a woman so twisted or convulsed by physical ailments as to be grotesque and completely unacceptable to others. Perhaps she was so tormented by inner forces and hallucinations that her existence was merely a prolongation of living death.

Most certainly as a result of her shame, she was severely ostracized from any meaningful relationships with other women and men—until that moment, however it occurred, when she came into contact with an unusually kind and gentle man who understood her and brought her healing and wholeness for the first time. What gratitude must have enveloped her—a gratitude so powerful it compelled her to leave home and join that wandering band of women and men that traveled with Jesus, ministering to each other's needs and proclaiming the arrival of the kingdom of God.

Popular tradition has associated Mary Magdalene with the woman of ill repute who anointed Jesus' feet in the Pharisee Simon's house (Luke 7), but there is actually no evidence to support this. Luke makes no reference to such a connection when he introduces Mary Magdalene as one of Jesus' followers several lines later (8:2). Perhaps the closest legitimation for the idea would come from the fact that Mary's town of origin, Magdala, was a city of bad reputation, and rabbis later would attribute its demise to licentiousness. In any case, this Mary has been painted with negative strokes throughout history.

Whatever the exact nature of Mary's condition, why would Jesus befriend her? At the least she was a woman oppressed by extreme physical or mental anguish, a shadow of what she might have been. At worst, she was also a woman of questionable moral character. Jesus was a rabbi, a holy man. It is true—he was a religious rebel, not very kosher in the eyes of the scribes and keepers of the law, suspect from the start. If he cared at all about his own reputation, he would have done well to walk the line; he should never have engaged in relationships with women that could be misinterpreted.

I think of Jesus' friendship with Mary Magdalene as an "illegitimate" one by cultural and religious standards. There was no reason why he should have paid attention to her. Certainly his male disciples raised their eyebrows more than once. Jewish society and religion gave them no license to even talk to each other on the street. Even Greek and Roman cultures allowed them little room in which to build a respectable relationship. Yet the Gospels point toward something strong, enduring, and tender that developed between Jesus and Mary—a beautiful friendship which both viewed mostly through the crisis, anguish, disappointment, unfathomable loss of the crucifixion, and

Janet M. Breneman will begin a new assignment in April 1991 as part of the Semilla (Central American Anabaptist Seminary) central office staff in Guatemala City, Guatemala. She was previously director of the Honduran Mennonite Bible Extension Program. Janet served in Honduras ten and one-half years with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, Salunga, Pennsylvania. This article is adapted from a meditation given at the Support Circle annual retreat, August 1990, in Goshen, Indiana.

the unspeakable joy of the resurrection.

There is something about this Mary with which I identify, even without understanding all the dynamics which brought her and Jesus together. What powerful urge caused her to follow and risk such physical and emotional closeness to him? Societal and religious norms were against her and any other woman who chose to follow so closely and serve such a religious leader. Did she realize this? Did she consciously choose risk? Were the friendship, understanding, and support she experienced in Jesus so adequate as to off-balance the questions and disdain she must have felt outside this small circle?

I remember struggling at a fairly young age with the Genesis passages that seemed to me to indicate that only men were created in the image of God. On the one hand, I felt a certain relief at being absolved from responsibility to share a kingdom message if I wasn't inherently part of that kingdom. On the other hand, it created the nightmare where one wrestles with a problem that has no solution. How could it be that I—a female who loved God deeply—was not created in the image of God? I felt excluded, second class. I couldn't understand God or men for doing such a thing. It seemed impossible, yet in my literal reading and shortsighted view of the text, there seemed no other alternative. No one at that point helped me to a more inclusive understanding.

At that same young age, I felt a call to missionary service. I verbalized this on one occasion and was told that was a fine vocation but I shouldn't really talk about it. So I didn't. In any case, I couldn't have articulated that call very well. There was no loud voice from the Lord while in the cornfield (or kitchen) which called me to China or Africa, and certainly not to Central America. Nevertheless that sense of call influenced my going to college, my repeated conversations with mission board personnel, and my choice of curriculum as I tried to discern what would prepare me best.

During my junior year of college I attended the Haile Selassie I University in Ethiopia, provided through the Council of Mennonite Colleges Junior Year Abroad Program. This was not a popular place to spend a year abroad; political unrest on campus and around the country was escalating during that year. But for me it was a year of testing the waters, developing intercultural friendships, and relating closely to Mennonite missionaries.

In retrospect, however, I am critical of my "call." Was it really a call to "foreign missions" or simply to Christian ministry? Perhaps the only option that seemed open to me as a woman was being a missionary to a faraway place. Outside my family, my early female models were Sunday school teachers—but working with children never appealed to me—and single missionary women who spoke at my church and sometimes stayed in my home. Subconsciously I learned that what I could not do at home, I could do "over there."

Is it possible that from adolescence I was being nudged by the Holy Spirit into some kind of "illegitimate" relationship with Jesus and his church, but I was not as foresighted and bold as Mary to take the risk? In those first years of leaving college and launching a career, no one encouraged me to explore other church options at home, such as pastoral ministry, teaching, administration, or further theological preparation. The accepted religious structures placed me where I "belonged," while Jesus beckoned me to risk greater closeness and a ministry according to my gifts, not my gender.

Even after teaching and directing our Bible Institute ten plus years in Honduras, I was not licensed or ordained for this work of teaching pastors. The Honduras Mennonite Church, however, chose to license me for my most recent term. That felt like a vote of confidence. Is that not primarily what licensing or ordaining signifies—the confidence which God and the people place in the call and commitment of the one serving?

The religious circumstances which made necessary Mary's "illegitimate" intrusion into Jesus' inner circle have not changed much. Even if women are certain of their commitment to God and the church, they remain in some sense "illegitimate."

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I do not doubt the authenticity of my deep love for God and the work of the church, or that God has called me to serve. That I am always faithful is more doubtful. Sometimes when I immerse myself in biblical study or meditation and prayer, I am filled to the bursting point with the awe of God's presence or a new discovery. Then I wonder, if I am not called to teach or preach or write or share that which God has given me, what am I to do with this overabundance of awe which seeks expression?

Mary's passion, her "illegitimate" stance, and Jesus' call to her to be faithful in spite of everything, are outstanding in the crucifixion/resurrection story. Is there anyone among all of Jesus' disciples who was more present with him in those last hours than Mary Magdalene? Of all the women—Jesus' mother, his mother's sister, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, Salome, Joanna, Susanna, Mary the wife of Clopas, and all the others who followed from Galilee—she is the only one mentioned in all four Gospels. She was one of the multitude of women that accompanied Jesus to the cross until the end with the other women and men; she sneaked along behind Joseph of Arimathea to see where and how they would lay his body, then went to prepare spices and ointments. She rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment, and then went at early dawn with other faithful women to place the spices—only to be shocked and horrified that the tomb was empty! It must have been the biggest surprise of her life.

I doubt that Mary followed Jesus to this extreme out of mere duty or obligation. There must have been something deeper: a personal affect, an abounding gratitude, a deep passion that drove her to stay close to him as long as she could to perform those last rites of preparing the ointments for his body. I would even risk that the personal dimension of the relationship was more important to her than a commitment to the new movement Jesus was creating, because the new movement still meant little to this motley crew of followers.

Her closeness to Jesus was uncalled for, and she probably knew it. Mary did not "belong" with Jesus in this darkest hour, yet how could she leave him? She was not part of the closest male group that rightfully surrounded him. The Gospel writers make it quite clear that all the Marys and other women were there at the cross, but "looking on from afar." When "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" followed Joseph to the tomb, they watched "sitting opposite the sepulchre" (Matt. 27:61). They weren't really there by the men's standards, but of course they were there—that faithful group of women who would not abandon Jesus now, standing in the shadows to watch and weep, later bringing the spices and simply being present.

Mary, in her overwhelming grief for an intimate friend who seems unnecessarily condemned to the cruelest death, suffers quietly, forgotten, in a corner, ostracized from the legitimate ones. Nevertheless she is not alone. The women have not abandoned each other either.

To her credit, Mary does not stay in this frame of mind. The accounts vary. It seems that this Mary of Magdala was among the first to come upon the empty tomb as well as to see the actual risen Lord. When the women heard "He has risen, he is not here!" they fled with trembling and astonishment because they were afraid. Nevertheless their first impulse was to go and tell the disciples. And the disciples' first impulse was not to believe them.

John's Gospel places Mary Magdalene in the limelight. She alone is mentioned as having gone to the tomb while still dark. When she found the tomb open, she ran to tell Peter and that other disciple whom Jesus specially loved. They ran to see, then went back to their homes. But Mary stayed there weeping, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. Lo and behold, there were two angels in white! In a moment, the gardener behind her wondered why she was weeping. And in another moment, she recognizes Jesus as he speaks her name, "Mary!"

This must have been the sweetest sound on earth in that moment of time. All was not lost. This dearest friend was alive. She certainly couldn't fathom how or why, but she struggled to grasp hold of him, to bury herself in his warm embrace and maintain this moment. He pulled her gently away and said, "Not yet, Mary, but go and tell my brethren..." Did she cringe at having to go share this news with the more important ones? Or did she realize that she, a woman with no legitimate voice, either legally or religiously, had just been charged with the most important news of all time? She went and told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"

Let us run ahead in time two thousand years. We as women still recognize that too often we come with little right of our own into the Lord's service. Too often we are chosen because there is no man better suited for the task, or because someone needs a token woman, or wants to give a woman the opportunity. Yet we are grateful for the steps being taken to heal the injustices of the past and to include women in the work of the church.

For the Lord does call us, and we come with a deep passion, with an unending variety of gifts to offer, with intelligent minds and creative thinking, with a love and hope and gentle touch which is born out of a woman's heart and intimate friendship and communion with this Holy One, this Friend, Jesus. But it is difficult to believe in ourselves or our call when we have been socialized for certain types of jobs or been told we don't have what it takes, or simply aren't affirmed.

The changes are difficult when the established norms are often against us and the church structures are mostly male-oriented. Well-meaning congregations are supportive, but frequently from a distance. Jesus is not physically present to embrace and encourage us. So some of us gather into a Support Circle—to be strong together, and to weep on each other's shoulders. To meet when we can and laugh together. To stay in touch by letter during the long stretches of separation. To gather around each other in communion, to encourage the love of Mary's Jesus within us. To explore ways to be true and fruitful in the places God has planted us.

We've come together with the deep desire that, in spite of hardship and opposition, we will be faithful. We will go and tell, with joy, the good news to the brothers and sisters at home and abroad. We will be committed to the task to which the Lord has called us. We will find our place, even with fear and trembling, and we will proclaim the message, though it seems an idle tale and is met with unbelief. For in unity with each other, there is strength and support which allows us to reach outward. In intimate relationship with that Friend of all friends, Jesus, there is confidence and gentle power.

Mennonite Single Women in International Mission—A History

RUTH SAUDER

Revival movements historically have been accompanied by an increased interest in mission outreach. This was true in the early nineteenth century when mission societies or mission boards were formed in cities across the country.

Early mission societies' policies regarding single women

In those early years, single women were sent reluctantly by any mission agency. If they were sent, they were often considered second-class missionaries. They lived with a missionary couple, never in households of their own, even when national groups interpreted this arrangement to mean that the missionary had two wives. The only exception was when single women lived and taught at a boarding school for girls.

This general feeling was clearly expressed in the following statement about a single woman, Eleanor Macomber, who was sent to Burma by the Baptist mission:

> Almost all of the heroines who have gone forth from the churches of America, to dot heathen soil with their lowly graves, have been attended by some stronger arm than that of weak, defenseless woman. Many of them have had husbands on whom they relied for support and protection and to whom they could turn with the assurance of sympathy in hours of anguish and gloom.
>
> But Miss Macomber went out attended by no such kind companion. She resolved on a missionary life without the offer of marriage being connected with it. No husband helped her decide the momentous question, and when she resolved, it was to go *alone.* Impelled by the Christian's high and holy motives, she determined on a course which would involve her in a thousand perplexities and load her with a thousand cares. With none to share these cares and perplexities—with no heart to keep time with the wild beatings of her own, she crossed, a friendless woman, the deep, dark ocean, and on soil never trodden by the feet of Christian men, erected the banner of the cross (Beaver 1968:61).

A woman writer states it this way:

> As 19th-century women, they . . . chose to become missionaries, compromising on second-class status and protective restrictions. In their view, the missionary vocation was worth the cost of the compromise. They understood the cost of their faith, paid it willingly, and for them "women's sphere" became the world (White 1988:19).

This general reluctance of missionary societies to send single women to the mission field led to the formation of many women's mission societies. By the year 1900 there were forty-one such groups in the U.S. and seven in Canada (Beaver 1968:87-88). When individuals felt the call of God for such service, they found a way to fulfill that call.

Single women and early Mennonite missionary vision

Near the end of the nineteenth century, several young Mennonite women felt called to the mission field before Mennonite mission boards were organized. Alice Yoder, originally from Lititz, Pennsylvania, went to India in 1897 with the Christian and Missionary Alliance to work in an orphanage in Khamgaon. Minnie Landis from Landis Valley, Pennsylvania, and Sara Alice Troyer of Milford, Nebraska, served with the China Inland Mission beginning in the 1890s. Rose Lambert served as matron of an Armenian orphan's school in Turkey from 1899-1910.

By the end of the 19th century, missionary vision was emerging in the family of Mennonite churches. The Mennonite Brethren Church formed a board of foreign missions in 1885, appointing an eight-member committee to be responsible for gathering monies for foreign missions and disbursing those monies according to conference resolutions. This committee reviewed and examined candidates who applied to the conference for service overseas.

At first they cooperated with the American Baptist Mission Union through whom the first two single women—Catherine Reimer and Anna Suderman Bergthold—were sent to India in 1898. A little later they formed their own sending agency—the American Brethren Mission Union later known as the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church in North America—and in 1899 sent out their first missionaries. The first single woman was Elizabeth Neufeld sent to India in 1899 (*Mennonite Encyclopedia* 1957:715-16).

By the early 1900s, the Mennonite Church had its own periodicals, educational institutions, and mission and relief organizations. The exposure of women to high education was a factor in their increasing desire to participate in church work both on the mission field and at home.

The General Conference Mennonite Church appointed their first missionary to work with native Americans in Oklahoma in 1880. The first overseas mission workers were sent to India in 1900 in response to a famine. The first single woman, Annie Funk, was sent in 1906 and served until 1912. A second, Anna P. Braum Gerig, was sent in 1908 and a third, Martha Penner, in 1909.

The work in China began independently in 1909, but was taken over by the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1914. The first single women sent to China were Talitha Neufeld in 1915 and Aganetha Fast in 1917 (*Mennonite Encyclopedia* 1957:714).

The Mennonite Church also sent missionaries to India in response to famine needs. The first single woman, Anna Mary Stalter, was sent in 1905 and served for twenty-two years. Fannie Hershey served as a single woman for seven

Ruth Sauder, half-time administrative assistant for Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions' president, is also director of the Millersville International House on a part-time basis. She served nine years in Guatemala and five years in Honduras with EMBMC.

years from 1913-1920, when she married G. J. Lapp and continued serving until 1945. Others serving before marriage were: Dr. Florence Cooprider, who served 1916-1922 as a single woman, married P. A. Friesen, and continued serving until 1941; Mary A. Wenger (Detweiler) from 1921-1938; Ada Hertzler (Ringler) from 1925-1938; and Dora Shantz (Gehman) from 1931-1940 (Good 1955:25, 30, 37).

Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities of Lancaster (Pennsylvania) Conference was established in 1917, and the first overseas missionaries were sent to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1934. Two single women were appointed that year—Lillie Shenk and Alma Hershberger. Phebe Yoder followed in 1937, as well as Vivian Denlinger (Eby) and Rhoda Wenger in 1939 (EMBMC personnel files). Other conference mission boards in the Mennonite Church were formed later to encourage more local ownership of mission program.

Resistance to the idea of sending single women overseas had waned considerably by the early decades of the twentieth century. Records show that in each of the Mennonite programs, single women were sent the same year or shortly after sending the first married couples. Some church leaders at that time felt that any kind of "executive work" by women usurped men's authority, but with the formation of mission and relief organizations, opportunities were provided for the first time for women as well as men to be more directly involved in the work of the church.

The first Mennonite Women's Missionary Society (MWMS) was founded in 1912 (Klinglesmith 1980:169ff.). Early leaders in this women's organization were Clara Eby Steiner, founder and first secretary, and Mary Burkhard, president. Mary served in India with General Conference after her husband's death—her enthusiasm for mission persuaded Florence Cooprider and Mary Good to enter the mission field. Ruth Yoder was another early leader of MWMS.

Responsibilities of single women overseas

Single women have generally carried greater responsibility on the mission field than at home. Opportunities for leadership and participation in decision-making came earlier and to a greater extent for women in mission than in the North American church. In fact, in some cases, being a woman was an advantage. Women missionaries could work with national women better than men because it was culturally more acceptable. This was true in medical work—where in some cultures women refused to be seen by male doctors—in teaching women in classroom settings, and especially in sharing about Christ with women in the villages.

In fact, women mission workers' responsibilities were sometimes greater than they felt comfortable with. Many women experienced frustrations because of inadequate language preparation, lack of adequate preparation to the new culture, difficulties in promoting improved nursing methods and cleaner practices, not enough drugs and medicines, not enough staff, being put in charge of whole hospitals with inadequate training and lack of funds.

Involvement and responsibility also brought joy. These included meaningful work with challenges of responsibility, visiting national homes, sharing a cup of tea or coffee and fellowship with the national women and their families. The work single women were involved in included Bible teaching for women and children, sewing and literacy classes, primary, middle, and secondary school teaching, teacher's college, medical training, nursing, direct church work, evangelism, leading women's groups, and selling and distributing Bibles and other literature. Single women brought a new life pattern to a culture where all women were married.

In more recent years single women have had more freedom to serve in leadership capacities. In some cultures, the single woman is regarded almost as a "third sex," sometimes with a different kind of respect than for the married woman, who is known more as her husband's wife than for the contribution she makes on the mission field. In societies with high illiteracy, the single woman missionary is involved in teaching or leadership training of men, because the pastors and church leaders are men in many cultures.

Statistics on single women serving with Mennonite agencies

The following series of charts and graphs gives information and shows comparisons among the major Mennonite and Mennonite-related mission records concerning involvement of single women in mission.

AIMM=Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
COM= Commission on Overseas Mission/General Conference
EMBMC=Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities
FMCMC=Franconia Mennonite Conference Mission Commission
MBM=Mennonite Board of Missions
MBM/S=Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services
MCC=Mennonite Central Committee
VMBM=Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions

CHART I
Number of Single Mennonite Women
Who Served Per Decade
Total Number of Women = 854
(Served at least three years)

	AIMM	COM	EMBMC	FMCMC	MBM	MBM/S	MCC	VMBM
1990	4	5	4		5	9	36	
1980s	11	23	28		15	28	177	
1970s	20	39	79		24	49	137	6
1960s	26	49	83	4	30	67	56	4
1950s	26	44	49	2	32	68	7	
1940s	20	26	9		15	42	2	
1930s	13	16	5		5	22		
1920s	9	16			7	19		
1910s	3	8			1	11		
1900s		3			1	6		
1890s						3		

*Note to the reader: Because agencies have different criteria for their computerized personnel records, these figures are tentative. Cases where a person has worked for more than one agency during their missionary career, or where a person was single when appointed but later married, or when terms served are not consecutive, may blur the statistics.

CHART II

Number of Years Single Women Served

Years	AIMM	COM	EMBMC	FMC	MBM	MBM/S	MCC	VMBM
3	6	17	25	-	7	5	179	1
4	4	7	15	-	4	7	35	-
5	1	5	10	1	4	5	22	-
6	1	3	10	1	5	10	9	-
7	2	3	12	-	1	9	9	-
8	3	2	5	1	-	3	4	-
9	5	3	3	-	3	6	5	2
10	2	1	4	-	3	3	2	-
11	-	-	2	-	3	4	2	-
12	1	1	5	-	2	2	2	1
13	-	2	3	-	3	2	-	-
14	2	2	2	-	-	6	-	-
15	-	3	1	-	1	-	1	-
16	-	4	3	-	1	1	1	-
17	1	1	3	1	2	3	-	-
18	1	2	2	-	-	2	-	-
19	-	-	4	-	1	4	1	-
20	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	-
21	2	1	2	-	-	3	-	-
22	1	2	5	-	1	-	-	-
23	1	3	2	-	1	-	-	-
24	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-
25	-	4	-	-	1	3	-	-
26	1	1	1	-	2	2	-	-
27	1	-	1	-	1	4	-	-
28	1	3	1	-	-	1	-	-
29	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-
30	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	-
31	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
32	1	1	1	-	1	2	-	-
33	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
34	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
35	-	3	-	-	1	3	-	-
36	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
37	4	5	2	-	-	3	-	-
38	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
39	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
40	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
41	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
43	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
48	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Tot.	757	1299	1311	36	728	2021	1136	33
Av.	16.1	15.3	10.2	4	13.2	17.4	4.19	8.25

Total Years Served: 7321 All-Agency Average: 11 years

CHART III

Countries Where Single Women Have Served
(At least three years)

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
Burkino Faso
Zaire (Congo)

Commission on Overseas Mission
Burkina Faso
China
Colombia
India
Japan
Mexico
Paraguay
Taiwan
Uruguay
Zaire (Congo)

Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities
Belize
China
Dominican Republic
Ethiopia
Germany
Guatemala
Honduras
Jamaica
Kenya
Luxembourg
Somalia
Tanzania
Venezuela

Franconia Mennonite Conference
Cuba
Mexico

Mennonite Board of Missions
Algeria
Argentina
Benin
Brazil
China
France
Ghana
India
Japan
Nepal
Paraguay
Puerto Rico
Yemen

Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services
Bangladesh
Brazil
China
Colombia
Ecuador
Ethiopia
Germany
Japan
Liberia
Mexico
Nigeria
Pakistan
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Spain
Zaire (Congo)

Mennonite Central Committee
Afghanistan
Algeria
Bangladesh
Bolivia
Botswana
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Cambodia
China
Colombia
Congo
Egypt
El Salvador
England
Ethiopia
Germany
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
India
Indonesia
Italy
Jamaica
Jordan
Kenya
Korea
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Mali
Mozambique
Nepal
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Paraguay
Philippines
Poland
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Thailand
Uganda
Vietnam
West Bank
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Virginia Mennonite Conference
Jamaica

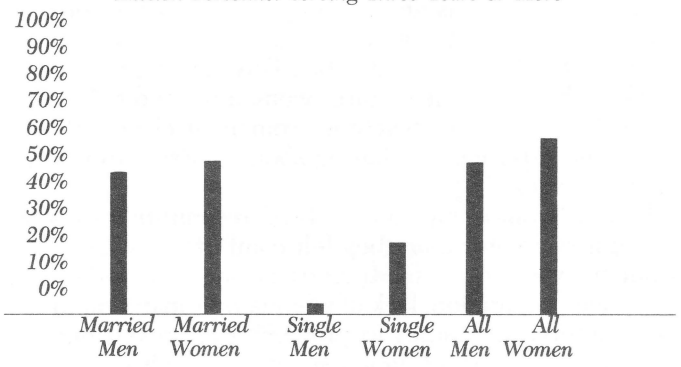
CHART IV

Commission on Overseas Mission
General Conference Mennonite Church
Personnel Comparative Study

Rather than doing a comparative study of personnel records for all the agencies involved—which would involve more time and material than available for the project—this one serves as a representative study. Only persons serving three years or more were included.

The number of married men in the study is 248.
The number of married women in the study is 250.
The number of single men in the study is 19.
The number of single women is 98.
The total number of persons is 615.

Mission Personnel Serving Three Years or More



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Support Needs of Bicultural Single Anabaptist Women

SARAH BURKHOLDER

Bicultural single Anabaptist women have shared joy and sorrow, suffering and celebration, despair and hope, life and death with people of different cultures in diverse parts of the world. They have been changed. They see with different eyes, they hear with different ears, and they respond in different ways. They have become bicultural, marginal women who live in a creative, enriching, and sometimes needy tension.

Bicultural women belong to two sociocultural worlds. They live at the periphery of those two worlds and find that no matter where they are, they are not quite "at home" (Sider 1978:1-5; Heisey and Longacre 1990). Being bicultural means they cannot identify fully with either culture and are often considered deviant by both cultures (Austin 1983:278-287). In response to the tension they feel from living at the boundary of two cultures, bicultural people create a new culture, a third culture, from the two cultures to which they have related (Hiebert 1982:1-6).

Ruth Goring Stewart describes her North American culture as navy blue, her Latin American culture as sunshine yellow, and herself as green—a creative tension, the mixture of the two. She writes:

> I feel like a perpetual visitor,
> Always a transient, never
> wholly a part.
> "Cultural relativism" is all
> very well, but
> sometimes I wish I could identify
> completely
> with something, some group, somewhere....

Who are these women who sometimes wish they could identify completely with something, some group, or some place? Most of them are women who have spent at least five years living in another culture working with the poor and oppressed, perhaps under the auspices of one of the Mennonite mission/service agencies. Hiebert calls them "second generation missionaries" because they know the language and customs of the people with whom they have worked. They are realistic about what can be accomplished, and about their own lifestyle and needs. These women know that if they are to be whole people some activities which clamor for their time and attention must be left undone. Becoming more realistic about what can be accomplished, the time it takes, and their own needs, some of them have asked if the current structures of Mennonite Church agencies provide the support they need to continue their work. "They are no less committed to the task. In fact, their commitment is long-term. But they are no longer willing to pay any price to attend meetings [and] classes.... Second-generation missionaries together with their experienced national co-workers do the greatest share of the mission work" (Hiebert 1982:3).

In addition to being bicultural and second-generation, who are these single Anabaptist women? For how much of the work of the Mennonite Church agencies are they responsible? What are their perceived needs? What kind of support do they desire? What would enable them to make a long-term commitment to the poor and oppressed—to the modern-day shepherds, fishermen, tax collectors, lepers, and prostitutes in our world? What are their current support systems and their social networks?

Mennonite Church agencies who have employed these women give some insight into who they are. Agency representatives describe them as having skills predominantly in the helping professions—nursing, teaching, nutrition, child care, and social work. Generally in their mid-thirties or older, they are dedicated and usually deeply spiritual. Many of them have simple lifestyles and few material needs. Most have served several terms with one or more of the agencies. They have been exposed to extreme poverty and oppression in the overseas settings. Asked about single males with similar interest, agency representatives could think of only one or two who might be interested in making such a long-term commitment to the poor and oppressed.

Why do these single women not become involved in long-term service if that is their interest? A kaleidoscope of ideas was voiced by agency representatives. Factors included financial security, inadequate retirement benefits, lack of stable community and consistent ongoing relationships, working through life issues such as singleness or a vocation, the difficulty of readjustment to North American society, the lengthy process of preparing for long-term service, youthful idealism, desire for further education, and the need to care for aging parents.

For how much of the work of Mennonite Church agencies are these single women responsible? Accurate information to that question is not easily accessible. However, if personnel patterns for overseas Mennonite Church agencies are similar to other denominational mission agencies, at least one-fifth of the mission force is bicultural single women. For every two married men on full-time

Sarah Burkholder is currently outreach coordinator at Maple City Health Care Center in Goshen, Indiana. She served seven years with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia. This article is adopted from a research assignment for a master's level course on Social Networks and Social Support.

assignment there is a single woman with a full-time assignment (Danielsen, Cummings, and Fry 1984). Could it be that one-third of the overseas work of Mennonite Church agencies is done by single women?

In addition to the perceptions of Mennonite Church agencies and the estimated contribution of single women to the work of those agencies, several sociological observations can be made. Many of these women have dense social networks due to the fact that Mennonites in general have dense social networks. Density of a social network refers to the proportion of people who could know each other to the people who actually do know each other in an individual's network (Israel, 1982). Due to their Anabaptist persuasion, these networks are most likely homogeneous. Homogeneity explains the degree to which network members have similar social attributes—age, educational level, income, religious preference, and shared values and norms (Israel 1982). Beyond this, little is known about networks of these women and the support they experience from family, friends, the church, and Mennonite Church agencies. However, one agency representative observed, almost as an afterthought:

> I think there is an issue, maybe a basic assumption, that a person who has never gotten married has not quite gone to where one normally goes in life. It is a negative stigma. It is not admitted in the church, but I believe it is there. It is hard to deal with because it is not out in the open. You can't get hold of it. The church won't admit it. . . . I think the nonchurch world is way ahead of the church in this area.

Could this influence the type of support experienced by bicultural single Anabaptist women? Does the Mennonite Church's ambivalence about the role of women in leadership effect the support church agencies can offer them? These questions deserve further exploration.

What do women who are bicultural, single, and Anabaptist say about themselves and their needs? They concur to being primarily involved in the helping professions, being in their mid-thirties to mid-forties, and sharing values and an Anabaptist faith commitment.

The primary need expressed by these women is for emotional or affective support—including empathy, care, concern, love, trust, and moral support (House 1981:135-146; Israel 1982:65-79).

Second, they identified a need for appraisal support. Appraisal support is information useful for self-evaluation (House 1981:135-146). While that may include the concept of advice and feedback (Israel 1982:65-79), in this situation it is closer to the concept of social comparison (Shinn 1984:55-76)—the need to feel okay about themselves when compared with those around them.

Third, a need for maintenance of social identity refers to the validation of their shared worldview (Israel 1982:65-79; Sider 1978:1-5). Bicultural single women find it difficult to face the materialism of the North American church and society. They feel others view their lifestyle concerns as "obnoxious." Broadhead (1983:521-537) defines this need for social identity as the need for affirmation.

While instrumental support—or the provision of tangible aid such as money and services—was mentioned, it was not a priority need. There are several reasons for its low priority. Perhaps Mennonite agencies, family, or friends are providing adequate tangible support. Perhaps it reflects their ages. Perhaps it fits with their value system and faith commitment.

These single women feel that support is important both while on assignment and on their return to North America. One woman said:

> I can say . . . that a major consideration for me in looking at further service work—overseas in particular—is the support system I would have both here and on a return to North America. My experience in returning to North America after two terms . . . was so confusing and painful that I do not wish to repeat it.

Coming back to North America is a major psychosocial transition for bicultural people (Parkes 1971:101-115). It involves "other persons, material possessions, the familiar world of home and place of work, and the individual's body and mind in so far as he can view these as separate from himself" (Parkes 1971:103).

One couple returning from Africa wrote, "We returned to find friendship gaps filled by others. . . . Loneliness and trying to fit in were major problems. It would have been helpful if someone had drawn us into a friendship circle or a cell group" (Klippenstein 1979:324-325). Feelings of alienation are very real. "Missionaries are often saddened to find they are no longer close to relatives and friends. They find their closest friends among other bicultural relatives and friends . . . [and] among other bicultural people" (Hiebert 1982:4).

In one study, returning missionaries listed spouses, friends, and relatives, in that order, as being the most helpful to them on returning to North America (Austin 1983:278-287). Obviously if the majority of these missionaries found spouses their number one support, it raises the question of where single bicultural people find their support upon returning to North America. Clyde Austin observed that while homecoming is difficult for all bicultural people, special attention needs to be given to the homecoming of singles because loneliness has often been their unrelenting foe (Austin 1983). One single returning to North America talked about home as the place where people should know who you are, where you should know the rules, where you should like to be—and then sadly concluded, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, you let yourself in" (Klaassen 1989:6).

While living and working with the poor and oppressed is no longer a major psychosocial transition because these women are "second-generation missionaries," it does provide its own unique set of stressful circumstances. Dealing with the realities of injustice, dire need, and seemingly unchangeable systems produces stress. Regardless of whether social support plays a primary or a buffering effect (House 1981) on the stress experienced, these women have clearly voiced their need for social support while in the work assignment. They are most articulate about their need for stable relationships in their work situations. A single woman currently working in Latin America writes:

> [I need] an ongoing person to live with in order to live here happily. I have lived in basically five different situations here—or six if I count brief times of living alone. I've lived with a group of four other people for several months, two people for a little over a year, and three different individuals.

Stress related to living situations of single women mission workers, both on assignment and during their returns

to North America, has been well documented in Marjory Foyle's book, *Overcoming Missionary Stress*.

One single woman who spent nine years working overseas says that she would not have stayed had it not been for a stable relationship with her co-worker, another single woman. Within such stable relationships, there can be reciprocity—giving and receiving of support within their network (Israel 1982:65-79)—and dimensions of affective and affirmative support. Broadhead (1983:521-537) suggests that reciprocity and affective/affirmative support are functions of a confidant relationship. The presence of a confidant in times of stress is important to one's well-being (Pilisuk and Minkler 1985). In addition, these stable relationships have a high level of intensity, or emotional closeness (Israel 1982). Research provides evidence to suggest that intensity and reciprocity within networks are positively related to an individual's well-being (Israel and Rounds 1987).

Structures which foster stable relationships would appear to help meet some needs of these bicultural single Anabaptist women. Some form of a self-help or mutual aid group would seem appropriate. Self-help groups help establish new network ties by linking a person in need with another person not previously part of the same network (Israel and Rounds 1987:311-351). This expands the options for support available to the person.

A closer look at self-help groups show that they are:

> ... voluntary small group structures for mutual aid in the accomplishment of a specific purpose. They are usually formed by peers who have come together for mutual assistance in satisfying a common need, overcoming a common handicap of a life disrupting problem, and bringing about desired social and/or personal change. The initiators and members of such groups perceive that their needs are not or cannot be met by or through existing social institutions (Katz and Bender 1982:65-79).

Generally self-help groups have one or two orientations, a type I (inner) or type II (outer) orientation (Froland 1981). An inner orientation is one in which members are concerned, share problems and feelings, and provide support and assistance to each other. The type II, or outer, orientation occurs when members direct their energies toward broader issues or causes.

A self-help group would seek to satisfy common needs which are not being met through the existing structures of the Mennonite Church agencies. It would be cause-oriented, for these women wish to live and work with the poor and oppressed. It would provide peers who share a common vision and a kindred spirit, and who seek emotional support as well as an enhanced sense of personal identity.

Most of these women would feel uncomfortable with an exclusive type I or type II self-help group. And they are scattered around the world, living in Asia, Africa, and South, Central, and North America, which means face-to-face social interactions are physically impossible. This calls for modification of the self-help group identified by Froland, and for additional strategies to respond to the identified needs. The major social interactions of this group may need to be by letter. Face-to-face sharing could be encouraged by scheduling regional meetings/retreats or visits to North America in such a way that significant numbers of them could meet at least once a year. Perhaps the two traditional orientations of the self-help group could be combined. With modifications, the formation of a self-help group could reduce or even eliminate some aspects of these women's sense of isolation or uniqueness through the use of social comparison and consensual validation within the group setting.

In addition to creating self-help groups, these women could enter work assignments in self-selected dyads or triads, selecting women they already know and trust and with whom they are comfortable. Well-documented research shows that women are better at providing social support than men, and that relationships with other women are more beneficial to health and well-being of an individual than are relationships with men (House 1987:135-146). This type of supportive environment would encourage stability, reciprocity, and intensity in relationships, and would possibly encourage confidant relationships.

While such strategies could indeed meet the needs of many bicultural single Anabaptist women, some questions need to be asked. First, research shows that dense social networks can make it more difficult to adjust to new situations (Gottlieb 1985:5-22) because of the lack of social ties to be drawn upon as additional resource. Would creating a self-help group make the network ties of these single women denser? Should such a self-help group go beyond the boundaries of the Mennonite Church and its agencies? Are there other established groups to which these single women could relate to meet their needs and expand their networks?

From a different perspective, would a self-help group only serve to fragment the Mennonite Church and the families of these single women even more? Would it weaken their existing ties and avenues of support? Would it be better to encourage sensitive support in the already existing ties of these women (Sidel and Sidel 1976:67-69)?

Pilisuk and Minkler (1985:101) state that "the paucity and the maldistribution of supportive relationships is a product, not an accident, of other arrangements in our society. Like income level and clean air, social support is also a part of our larger sociopolitical environment." Coupling this with the statement on the stigma of being single in the Mennonite Church and the church's ambivalence about women in leadership roles, questions arise about the root causes for lack of support. Would a self-help group only treat the symptoms of a deeper problem? Is the problem accentuated by the fact that these single women are also bicultural? Failure to address root causes and merely treat symptoms is one of the criticisms of self-help groups (Sidel and Sidel 1976). Mission/service agencies and their constituencies should actively seek ways to enable bicultural single Anabaptist women to share effectively the good news of the kingdom of God with the modern-day shepherds, fisherman, tax collectors, lepers, and prostitutes in our world.

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A Model for Empowering Single Women in International Ministry

LINDA E. WITMER

Support Circle is an Anabaptist, scattered community of bicultural, single women committed to long-term involvement among the poor and oppressed, both nationally and internationally. These women of kindred spirit have joined together to support each other in living upside-down kingdom values in a society that neither supports singleness nor a lifestyle of simplicity and service.

Although they are not always joyful about their singleness and are in need of support from others who identify with and understand their needs, the group views singleness as a gift from God which enables them to serve in special and unique ways. The advantages of independence, flexibility, and mobility in the life of a single person carries with it the potential for lack of intimacy, little continuity of relationships, and minimal accountability. The structure of the Support Circle is designed to provide support and consistent long-term relationships needed for wholeness. Some also hope that this group will provide a pool of singles who can partner as teams in service.

The initial brainstorming for the concept of the Support Circle began in August 1988 when Mennonite Central Committee workers Linda Shelly, Susan Classen, and Sarah Burkholder met to discuss their own needs as singles. They were willing to commit themselves radically to a life of service but felt that the Mennonite Church had insufficient support structures to provide for their needs. MCC gave encouragement and support for their discussion.

As a result of this meeting, an outline of their vision and letters were sent to other single people who were acquaintances of the three, most of whom were serving in Latin America. The letter invited these singles to share their insights, experiences, and perceived future needs in light of making a long-term service commitment.

The focus was on the single person, not because these women believed that bicultural couples and families do not have needs similar to their own, but because they felt unqualified to speak for married couples and families, and because of a restless premonition that some of the needs, or the way in which those needs are met or not met, are different for singles than for couples and families. While willing to share their findings and dialogue with couples and families, they strongly encourage couples and families to talk among themselves to identify what would enable them to also make long-term commitments to service assignments.

From the response to the initial letters, enough interest and need was present to continue developing the vision. About 20 single women, living in different cultures and situations scattered across the face of the globe, had shown interest in becoming a part of what eventually came to be known as the Support Circle. However, several people needed to commit time to the formation of this vision before it became a reality.

Kathy Blair, Sarah Burkholder, Barbara Eichorn, Linda Shelly, and Linda Witmer decided to live in community in Goshen, Indiana, for a summer to nurture the growth of a support structure. While two of the women had full-time jobs, the others worked at part-time jobs and did volunteer work in the Goshen community. The household worked together to develop a tool for a community needs assessment for a low-income area in North and East Goshen. Time, talents, and resources were shared. Several retreat weekends were set aside specifically to process ideas and to set goals and objectives. Since these women did not know each other well, it was also important to spend time sharing their personal journeys, needs, hurts, and joys. The time spent together was a good base for the emerging structure.

The group sought counsel from persons at Reba Place

Linda E. Witmer is associate professor of nursing at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. She served nine years in Guatemala with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, Salunga, Pennsylvania, and Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.

Fellowship, Mennonite mission agencies, seminaries, and from spiritual directors and counselors. Correspondence with other singles who expressed interest was of primary importance so that their needs could be addressed and they could begin to feel ownership in the process. Minutes of the formal meetings were written in detail and sent to all the people on the mailing list. It was a challenge to keep everyone informed and to respond to all the questions and suggestions coming from those in overseas assignments.

The first retreat time was spent identifying and clarifying issues. Areas of discussion were categorized as follows:

Personal

- Service out of centeredness in Christ through commitment to Bible reading, prayer, meditation, fasting, and personal retreat time.
- Accountability in working toward wholeness—labeling and owning feelings and actions, living reflectively, self-evaluation, and giving and receiving love.

Community

- Continuity of relationships with people who have a shared history with others that can allow for a lifetime of connectedness.
- Openness in sharing one's spirituality with one another.
- Intercession for one another and praying together.
- Living upside-down kingdom values—stewardship of time, talents, money, creative ways of pooling resources, commitment to a simple lifestyle, environmental concerns, etc.
- Accountability to one another.
- Gift discernment.
- Celebrations and development of meaningful traditions for the group.
- Guidance in decision-making.
- Giving and receiving affirmation.
- Support for variety within the group—supporting each person's uniqueness and differing points of view.
- Maintaining tension between exclusivity and inclusivity.

Mission

- Ongoing presence with the poor and oppressed—listening, learning, and allowing for personal transformation.
- Raising people's consciousness of what is happening around the world and presenting options that promote peace and justice.
- Advocacy both at the grassroots level and within the system.
- Empowering and enabling people.
- Mutual partnership in mission—being willing both to give and receive.
- Hospitality.
- Active participation in a faith community beyond the Support Circle.

To bring closure to the Goshen household summer, a weekend was set aside for evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of life together. It was also a time for discussing future expectations and plans. There was a spirit of gratitude for the privilege of being together and the progress made in the formation of a support system. Another retreat was scheduled for October 1989 for further discussion and support, with invitations sent to those on the mailing list. Eight persons worked at giving form and sustenance to the new structure. Six areas were identified in which the group felt ready to make a commitment:

1. Involvement with the poor and oppressed.
2. Empowering and enabling the poor and oppressed.
3. Being community to one another for discernment and encouragement.
4. Practicing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, exercise, and stewardship of time, talents, and resources.
5. Modeling a holistic healthy attitude toward singleness.
6. Being involved in the community where one lives—household, neighborhood, and church.

The group recognized that each person is at a different place in the above areas of commitment, and that challenging must be done with sensitivity. They agreed to participate in a bimonthly support letter, attend a yearly retreat in North America or a regional retreat when possible, and be a spiritual friend with one other person within the group.

The bimonthly support letter has been the connecting force and source of strength for members. Barbara Eichorn is the coordinator. Letters sent to Barbara are copied for everyone in the group. Members pay a fee to cover postage and copying costs. Eight questions guide the content for the support letter.

1. What has happened to you?
2. How did you take care of yourself? (spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically)
3. In what ways have you interacted with the poor and oppressed?
4. How did you experience God's presence? What new insights and inspirations do you have to share?
5. What made you happy/sad?
6. What decisions/changes do you want to make in the weeks to come?
7. Prayer requests.
8. Notes to others in the group.

Yearly retreats will be organized in North America for all members of the Support Circle. The first annual retreat was held in August 1990 following Mennonite World Conference. Twelve of the current seventeen members were able to be present. Celebrations, worship, communion, silence, and relaxation were all a part of the time together. It was a good chance to bond and build relationships. A commissioning service was held for three members who were leaving for service in Somalia, Honduras, and Botswana. In December 1990 the first Central American regional retreat was held with six members attending. The group found this time together to be very supportive, particularly in the midst of political conflict and isolation.

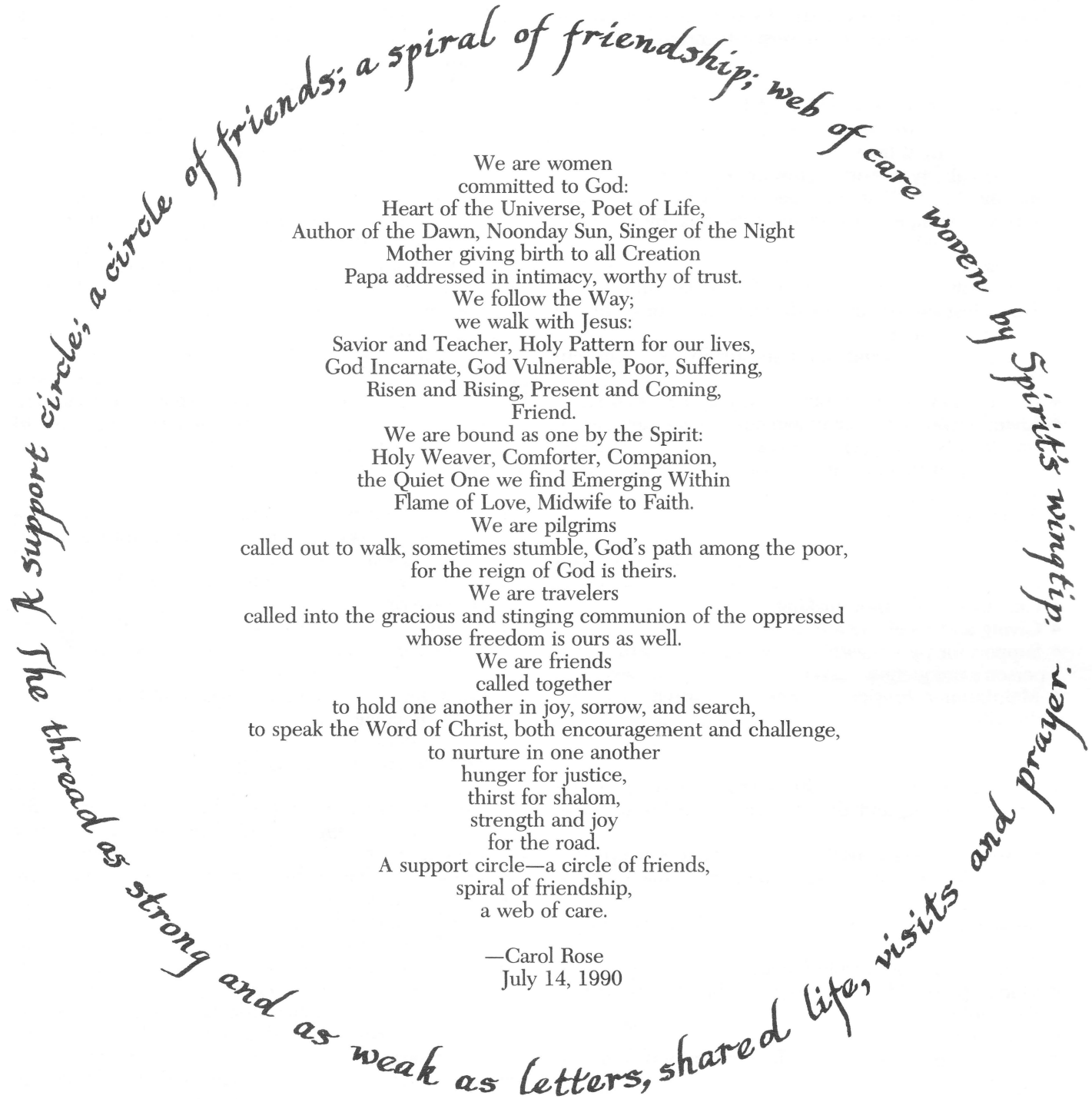
Presently the Goshen household is the center for communication and dissemination of information. If there is a crisis or an emergency such as a death in the family, the Goshen household is called to inform other members. The Goshen household welcomes visits from Support Circle members during furloughs in North America.

A strong bond is developing among the Support Circle. Presently the group feels they should not grow any larger,

in order to test the existing structure and adequately meet the members' needs. The task already seems somewhat overwhelming.

Requests for membership in the group havé come from both married and single bicultural persons. After discussing possible models for connecting people, it was decided that members will help interested persons connect with each other and encourage formation of new groups like the Support Circle.

Many questions still remain. As the group matures and changes, new problems and issues arise. Differing levels of commitment and need are expressed in the group. Communication at a distance is sometimes difficult. Isolation remains a problem for some. Reentry and a place for rejuvenation and reflection are ongoing issues. Support Circle is an emerging model attempting to respond to needs of its members.


A support circle; a circle of friends; a spiral of friendship; web of care woven by Spirit's wingtip, rekindled by letters, shared life, visits and prayer. The thread as strong and as weak as

We are women
committed to God:
Heart of the Universe, Poet of Life,
Author of the Dawn, Noonday Sun, Singer of the Night
Mother giving birth to all Creation
Papa addressed in intimacy, worthy of trust.
We follow the Way;
we walk with Jesus:
Savior and Teacher, Holy Pattern for our lives,
God Incarnate, God Vulnerable, Poor, Suffering,
Risen and Rising, Present and Coming,
Friend.
We are bound as one by the Spirit:
Holy Weaver, Comforter, Companion,
the Quiet One we find Emerging Within
Flame of Love, Midwife to Faith.
We are pilgrims
called out to walk, sometimes stumble, God's path among the poor,
for the reign of God is theirs.
We are travelers
called into the gracious and stinging communion of the oppressed
whose freedom is ours as well.
We are friends
called together
to hold one another in joy, sorrow, and search,
to speak the Word of Christ, both encouragement and challenge,
to nurture in one another
hunger for justice,
thirst for shalom,
strength and joy
for the road.
A support circle—a circle of friends,
spiral of friendship,
a web of care.

—Carol Rose
July 14, 1990

Carol Rose is presently working in Thailand with Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania. She earlier served three years with MCC in Honduras. The calligraphy circle was designed by Barbara Eichorn, corporate secretary for Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana. Both Barbara and Carol are members of the Support Circle.

Experiencing Japan Singly

MARY BEYLER

"Aunt Mary, why aren't you married yet?" five-year-old Jacob asked out of the blue while on a walk through the woods on his family's Ohio farm. "Because I haven't found anyone who wants to work with me in Japan" seemed to satisfy him. But I believe that simple answer to my nephew indicates most honestly my position on both my singleness and my international ministry. Both my singleness and my call to long-term ministry in Japan have evolved. I did not choose singleness as a way of life. I would not be honest if I did not state here at the outset that at this point in my life I would welcome a marriage partner, but my call and commitment to Japan take precedence over that desire.

My direct connection with international ministry in Japan began with a three-year term under Mennonite Board of Missions as a math teacher at Christian Academy, a school for missionary children in Tokyo, Japan. But I can look back and find numerous pushes and pulls toward the Orient, from my parents' thwarted plans to be missionaries in China to a Goshen College Study Service Trimester in Korea. Following my math-teaching term in Tokyo, I extended my time in Japan with a three-year English teaching term in Kushiro, Hokkaido. The call to Japan was beginning to unfold. Interspersed with Japanese language school and study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, a second term at Kushiro followed. I am now in my third year in Kitami, Hokkaido, as a general missionary.

In those early years in both Tokyo and Kushiro, I was perfectly happy to be single. In fact, I was glad not to be tied down with family commitments and to be able to invest my time and energy in my work and in experiencing Japan. Due to starting out as a short-term teacher in an American school, I ended up doing language study in several separate stints, but I am one of the few Mennonite missionary women who completed the full allotment of language study. Where there were children in the family, it was usually the women rather than the men whose language study was interrupted or curtailed.

There were other advantages to being single that I was consciously aware of in my beginning years in Japan. Being only one person instead of a couple or a family made it easier for Japanese to invite me into their homes. Also, being alone, I was forced to seek out Japanese friends for companionship and socialization. Being single definitely affected my bonding to Japan in a positive way.

Later, as I became involved with the Mennonite Church in Hokkaido and more competent in the Japanese language, my singleness put me onto conference committees and brought me speaking invitations, responsibilities that married missionary women seldom have because their husbands "represent" the households. I am recognized as a missionary in my own right, whereas a married woman shoulders the language and cultural patterns of being a wife.

Of course there are also disadvantages to being single, many of which I was not consciously aware of or did not want to face in my twenties and early thirties when I was not yet ready for marriage. Although a couple, with or without children, would not have been expected to share housing, I was persuaded that the mission-owned house available to use in Kushiro was too large to live in alone and also that I could benefit from Japanese housemates. Living with housemates was not easy for me, but I did have cordial relationships with two of the housemates I had during that first Kushiro term. A third housemate, however, was the source of considerable stress during the year and a half the arrangement lasted. That same house was shared the several months I overlapped with the couple preceding me and the couple following me. Such a situation would probably not have been considered if it had been two couples involved. Logistics and finances may have been easier that way, but not always human relationships. Ever since then I have lived alone in Hokkaido.

My first term in Kushiro was a classic case of a single person succeeding a couple and inheriting the work of two. I ended up with all the church responsibilities the couple had shared, plus I taught more English hours than either one of them did. At the beginning, I had no way to question this work load, and the situation was exacerbated by my workaholism and my language, cultural, and emotional inability to say "no." Besides, there were spoken and unspoken feelings in the Japanese community that because I did not have family that I needed to spend time with, I could spend more time at work, and also because I was alone, I needed more work in order not to be lonely.

To further complicate the situation, the senior missionary couple in the district happened to be on North American assignment during my first year in Kushiro. True, it was not my first term in Japan, but after an initial overlap with the preceding couple, I was plunged all alone into this new all-Japanese world, so unlike the "little America" environment of my Tokyo years. No one, myself included, gave much thought then to the isolation of my first term in Hokkaido because of my aggressive outward adjustment, but the lack of both proximate American colleagues and proficiency in Japanese language and culture forced me into an unhealthy self-sufficiency.

At the time, I was pleased to be on my own. I was energetic and ambitious, excited about being in Hokkaido, devoted to the church, and determined to succeed. I didn't want and didn't think I needed American colleagues or companionship on an everyday basis. This state of affairs did wonders for my language and cultural acquisition, cemented my attachment to Japan, and created the environment out of which I began to hear the call to long-term involvement in Japan. But it is only now, a decade later, that I am beginning to recognize and recover from the workaholism and emotional isolation of those early Hokkaido years.

Although determined to succeed "on my own," I sensed intuitively that at least some American fellowship was necessary for my well-being, and I acted upon that need. I, rather than the mission board or the church, initiated such fellowship for myself. In fact, I even had to defend my need for it with certain Japanese. The mission board, however, was understanding. In my first Hokkaido term I made regular visits to an American Mennonite family in another city, and even now periodic fellowship and relaxation with American Mennonite colleagues are as

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Mary Beyler was appointed by Mennonite Board of Missions in 1974 for service in Japan.

important as ever. From the beginning I was warmly welcomed into and have participated regularly in the MBM Japan group, although individual ties have been more meaningful to me than group experience.

I am not sure whether this is strictly a result of my singleness or not, but I am the one among us Mennonite missionaries who visits the others most often. The fellowship has been worth enough to me that I am willing to bear the burden of traveling, to be the visitor more often than the visited. My location in both Kushiro and Kitami has also meant that I have more chances to visit others than they have to visit me in connection with church business.

Despite my bonding in Japan, I have never tried to "go Japanese" but have picked and chosen what Japanese customs to adopt in my everyday life. I sleep on the floor but I sit in chairs. I don't particularly cook Japanese, preferring to eat Japanese food when I eat out or am invited out.

Nor do I claim to maintain a Japanese inner world. Of course I still read, write, think, and pray mainly in English, but I can go days, sometimes weeks, without speaking with anyone else in English except for English lessons. I have naturally been influenced by Japanese conversational and relational patterns to the extent that my English habits have been noticeably affected. Living alone in the midst of a Japanese environment makes my periodic returns and adjustment to the U.S. more difficult, I think, than for a couple or family who have each other with whom to sustain their American identity.

I write letters regularly as a way to keep up with family and friends. As a single person I probably maintain a wider range of relationships than a married couple. Also my family of origin retains a high priority in my life. Half a century ago the mission board recognized the differing relational and social needs of single and married missionaries by making single missionaries' terms one year shorter than married couples' terms. Nowadays there is no difference in term length.

In Japan, where the still-common practice of arranged marriage makes it theoretically possible for all who want to get married to do so, marriage is expected and assumed to an even greater extent than in North America. Strangers ask me not "Are you married?" but "Is your husband American or Japanese?" Insurance salespersons at the door ask immediately, "How old are your children?" I am quite tired of answering whether or not I would be willing to marry a Japanese man. These sorts of questions can be annoying and sometimes embarrassing, but, in general, the strangeness of my foreignness overrides or at least balances the strangeness of my singleness. I am viewed first as a foreigner, and I experience more pressures as foreigner than as single woman.

Overall, I think being single has enhanced my possibilities for ministry and encouraged my bonding with Japan, but it has also added to the emotional stress. It is rather ironic that only now, as I have finally become somewhat more capable of and comfortable with functioning more fully in Japan, has a desire to share the everydayness of my life emerged. I am now open to marriage in a way I certainly was not before, but I have, in a sense, painted myself into a corner. The call I have received and the choices I have made have placed me in a position where the possibilities of finding a suitable mate are extremely low. I desire marriage and, at the same time, I desire to be in Japan. Singleness was never a specific part of my call, so I am now learning how to deal with this more recent desire for marriage in light of my continuing desire to live in faithfulness to my primary call to ministry in Japan.

Looking back over my sixteen years of involvement with Japan, I can see clearly that becoming more aware of both the limitations and the joys of my given circumstances has prompted me to recognize my ultimate dependency on God. Of course, learning to deal with one's circumstances is a process that faces anyone, married or single, anywhere, in one's own country or abroad.

In Review

Women Overseas: A Christian Perspective on Cross-Cultural Adaptation. By Gretchen Janssen. Intercultural Press, 1990, 152 pp., $14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Alice M. Roth

Out of her own experience as an expatriate wife, Presbyterian minister Gretchen Janssen offers a readable handbook for cross-cultural adaptation. Her central questions are the right ones: who are you, and where are you going? She asserts the importance of maintaining a healthy self-identity in a new environment and of defining oneself in the context of faith.

The book could be titled "Wives Overseas." The author herself says, "This book is intended to be a guide for wives who accompany their husbands and families in major geographical moves." There is, however, much in this little volume of value to any woman crossing cultures.

Strengths of the book include fresh, creative interpretations of relevant Scripture and the exercises and questions at the end of each chapter. These help to accomplish the author's intent, that this be a useful book for small-group or two-by-two use, as well as for individual reading and reflection.

Janssen's book is based on research as well as personal experience. The appendix includes her questionnaire; 200 women responded. Her chapter on culture shock and adaptation is the longest and the strongest in the book.

The weakness of this volume lies in the assumptions of its narrow scope: written for the woman whose role is primarily defined as supporter of husband and children, with no hint of mutuality in the decision to be overseas. Further, "It is on the wife and mother that the responsibility for a positive family adjustment most often falls; in most cases she is expected to nurture the rest of the family through the adjustment process." For many of us, this is a flawed view of parenting and family nurturing. It is a serious weakness in a book that offers a lively and creative perspective on faith and cross-cultural adaptation.

Alice M. Roth is vice-president for Overseas Ministries with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective. Edited by Letty M. Russell, Kwok Pui-Lan, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, and Katie Geneva Cannon. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988, 181 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ingrid Schultz

This book, growing out of the 1987 Women's Interseminary Conference, shows effectively that "autobiography is an important part of theology, not just an afterthought by way of example or illustration" (p. 15). The stories of the eight women contributing essays to the book come from a variety of geographical, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The metaphor, "our mothers' gardens," provides a helpful framework. Each contributor reflects on her own theological heritage, particularly on how her theology was influenced by the women of previous generations.

Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens is divided into three sections to show that the task of gardening requires three interrelated steps: Claiming Our Mothers' Roots, Clearing Our

Space, and Cultivating a Global Garden. The women who contribute to each section do not idealize what they have inherited from their mothers' gardens but admit that they "have inherited not only their flowers but also their insects" (p. 67). This honest reflection challenges the reader to reflect critically on her own theological and cultural inheritance, both on what needs to be cultivated and what might require weeding. There are many more powerful stories of women waiting to be told. The annotated bibliography provides suggestions for further reading.

Ingrid Schultz is a second-year student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana. Ingrid served four years with MCC in Bolivia.

Being Sexual ... and Celibate. By Keith Clarke. Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1986, 182 pp., $4.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ingrid Schultz

Although specifically written for those who are part of Catholic religious communities, this book is helpful reading for all who have chosen a celibate lifestyle. Clarke, a member of the Capuchin Franciscans, writes frankly about his own pilgrimage in coming to understand the connection between celibacy and sexuality. A central thesis of the book is that "human sexuality is about intimacy" (p. 30). The need for intimacy is at the core of each individual, and Clarke looks at practical ways that intimacy in relationships can be fostered within a commitment to celibacy.

Clarke emphasizes the importance of community in the life of the celibate person. He also stresses the importance of prayer and of developing an intimate relationship with God. The last chapter, "Belonging Uniquely to God," provides helpful theological reflection on the celibate life. After looking at the importance of intimate relationships, Clarke reflects on what it means to belong uniquely to God and to be God's "partner in loving other human beings" (p. 180).

Being Sexual ... and Celibate, in looking honestly at the issues of loneliness, sexual needs, and fear of intimacy, provides a valuable resource for both single and married persons in the church.

Ingrid Schultz is a second-year student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. Earlier she served four years with Mennonite Central Committee in Bolivia.

We Dare to Dream: Doing Theology as Asian Women. Edited by Virginia Fabella and Sun Ai Lee Park. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990, 156 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Alice Ruth Ramseyer

Virginia Fabella, a Maryknoll sister in the Philippines, and Sun Ai Lee Park, a Disciples of Christ minister in Korea, chose these essays from journal articles with the aim of encouraging women in Asia to engage in serious theologizing. As they say, if the emerging theology in Asia is to be significant to all, it must be an integration of men's and women's thinking.

The essays, written by Catholic and Protestant women from Korea, the Philippines, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia, seek to strengthen women's consciousness of their equality with men in the sight of God. They emphasize the need to counteract the patriarchalism which is integral to so much of Asia and is present in the church as well. The essays vary greatly in emphasis and quality. At times one feels writers are still too dependent on Western feminist theologizing or liberation or *minjung* theology, but those writings are the soil which nurtures this attempt, and as such this dependency is probably a necessary step toward expressing the gospel as good news for women and men in Asia.

The need for women in Asia to do theology unique to their situation strikes home when Fabella points out that 97 percent of the people of Asia are not Christian (p. 4) and "women's inferior status has become part of the working definition of being human in Asia" (p.11).

I was personally prodded most by the articles from the Philippines. Fabella summed up a most helpful emphasis: It is "my concern ... that my Christology not only express who Jesus is for me, but also recapture Jesus' life and message in such a way that it can be liberating and empowering for other women" (p.13). Dominguez, in writing of a biblical concept of human sexuality, says, "We women should rediscover our true heritage and discover a genuine, humanizing relationship between the two sexes that would make us more human rather than brutal towards one another" (p. 86). Mananzan, describing the struggles of the oppressed, reflects on the cost of social awareness. "To conscientize is truly a serious business, because the price of awareness is anguish" (p.103).

This book would be useful for people working in the countries named, or for those seeking to know the nature of women's theologizing in those countries. The creative stimulation of the book lies more in the accounts of struggles in contextualization than in the theologizing.

Alice Ruth Ramseyer and her husband, Robert, are overseas workers in Hiroshima, Japan, with the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission.

Faith and Revolution in Nicaragua: Convergence and Contradictions. By Giulio Girardi. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989, 194 pp., $13.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Juan Martinez

Giulio Girardi addresses the issue of the proper Christian response to revolution from within the context of Sandinista Nicaragua. Girardi, an (expelled) Italian priest, has been involved in the Marxist-Christian debate for many years. His participation in the Sandinista revolution is the basis for his analysis and defense of pro-Sandinista Nicaraguan Christians.

The subtitle, "Convergence and Contradictions," defines Girardi's understanding of the relationship between Christians and Marxists. He analyzes orthodox Marxism and Christianity and recognizes that they are mutually exclusive. Yet one can be a Sandinista Christian. This is because Sandinismo is not doctrinaire Marxism; it has recognized the "revolutionary potential" of the Christian faith (p. 44). Also, many Christians accept the importance of Marxist analysis as a way to build a new society (liberation theology). Thus these specific Christians and Marxists have developed a convergence between the two movements.

The book is very partisan, leaves many crucial theological and political questions unanswered, and has become dated due to the changing world situation. Many of Girardi's assessments are difficult to handle (for example, that on judgment day Che Guevara will be among those blessed by the Father, p. 103). On the other hand, Girardi forces Christians to face the fact that the church has most often sided (at times unconsciously) with the bourgeoisie, in opposition to the poor. Girardi has sided with Sandinista Marxism because he is convinced it sides with the poor. He challenges Christians to clearly define where they will stand.

Juan Martinez, formerly pastor of the Parlier Mennonite Brethren Church, is now director for Hispanic Ministries for the Pacific District of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

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EDITORIAL

Single women in international mission and service is the theme of this issue of *Mission Focus*. The writers are single women who have served from seven to twenty years on various continents with different Mennonite agencies. Three general themes surfaced throughout the articles.

On behalf of Anabaptist bicultural single women, I would like to express appreciation for the opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings.

We are women. We celebrate our femininity and the gifts we bring to the church's mission and service agencies. We are women on a spiritual journey, open and responsive to God's presence in our lives. Companionship from women friendships and support groups empowers us on the journey. Being understood and affirmed by both men and women enables us to serve the church more effectively.

Our role as North American women is to move toward greater freedom and wholeness for all women, and to challenge church structures that inhibit our growth and creativity. We desire to partner with international women enabling us all to develop to our fullest potential. Our inner journey with God enables us to break down walls that separate and cause us to compete and oppress one another. It frees us to work together for peace and justice for all humanity, especially those who are poor and oppressed.

We are bicultural. Being bicultural leaves us homeless. It adds stressors and vulnerability. There is no sense of belonging or place of safety where we can let go and be free of pressure. We fit neither into North American culture nor into the cultures where we serve.

We move and work between cultures with an expanded horizon and worldview. We have had the privilege of giving and receiving from more than one culture. Because of our exposure and exchanges with other cultures, we have an opportunity to be on the cutting edge of birthing new visions and dreams.

Our world has millions of people experiencing homelessness due to war and political instability, family violence, mental illness, lack of affordable housing, and insufficient income. Homelessness is not only having no shelter but is an experience of loneliness, a painful condition of isolation, fear, and vulnerability.

Being bicultural and homeless helps us to identify and walk in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world who are also vulnerable, marginal, and homeless. We can share the sense of home and belonging which comes through our intimate relationship with God and the faith community. In John 15:4 Jesus says, "Make your home in me, as I have made mine in you." Safety, security, and a sense of belonging is wherever we are because God resides within each one. We become family to one another. It is out of our prayer life and inner walk with God that we are empowered for action.

Henri Nouwen states

> We all have gifts to offer and a need to receive. I am increasingly convinced that one of the greatest missionary tasks is to receive the fruits of the lives of the poor, the oppressed, and the suffering as gifts offered for the salvation of the rich" (in *Lifesigns*, published by Doubleday, 1986, p. 17).

Through the exchange of gifts between cultures, we are transformed. When we refuse the gifts offered to us, we show our desire to remain in power. When we begin to share equally, a sense of belonging is created and new life can manifest itself for all people.

We are single and celebate. Being single brings many unique opportunities. We have flexibility and mobility. Without disrupting family life, there is more freedom to move and travel. We are more adaptable to change and often have flexible schedules, allowing us to respond more easily to spur-of-the-moment opportunities. There is time and energy to develop relationships and participate in community and cultural activities.

In a traditional society singleness has unique characteristics. Because there are so few single women and they rarely have higher education, we as North American single women are sometimes seen as neither male nor female. Therefore, there are no set cultural norms to follow. This frees us to utilize our gifts and leadership in the church, unlike the women of that culture or our own. Some single women choose an overseas assignment for these reasons and then on reentry to North America have felt stifled and powerless in the church.

In *Clowning in Rome* (Doubleday, 1979) Henri Nouwen describes celibacy as the holy space within each person which is open to God's presence. This is an essential element for all Christians, not just singles. Rather than attaching ourselves to another person, we as singles can be vulnerable before God and live in the embrace of God's love which cannot be violated by any human being.

Celibacy reminds married couples of their need to nurture their own inner, holy space and not totally depend on their relationship with each other. Marriage speaks to celibates about the love of God making intimate relationships rich and fulfilling. Each can strengthen the other in the faith community.—Linda Witmer, Guest Editor

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MISSION FOCUS

Strategies for Revitalizing Plateaued Churches

HENRY J. SCHMIDT

Current growth patterns

A recent *Christianity Today* article (Parrott & Perrin, 1990:29) raises an important question regarding denominations and churches, "Will the new Christian movements live up to the old maxim: 'the longer they burn, the smaller the flame'?" Why do churches tend to grow most rapidly in their first five years of existence and seldom exceed the size they are on their twelfth birthday? Why have 80 to 85 percent of the 375,000 churches in North America plateaued or gone into numerical decline in their growth pattern? Sixty-seven percent of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention are plateaued or declining (Allen, 1989:1). Anabaptist/Mennonite churches in North America fit that same general pattern as well. Yet, a recent study shows that 52 percent of those unchurched could see a situation where they would become fairly active church members (Princeton Religious Research Center, 1988). How can plateaued and declining churches change their growth pattern in view of fields that are "already white for harvest" (John 4:35 RSV)?

Understanding church plateaus and the bigger picture

In addressing plateaued and declining churches, let me note three important theological assumptions about the church and the nature of growth. First, church growth begins with a kingdom perspective. The centerpiece of our mission is God-consciousness, God-centeredness, and God-sentness. It focuses on God's reign in and through a "kingdom people" who model reconciliation, forgiveness, love, and mission. Mission vision and expansive evangelistic growth are not optional for a dynamic church.

Second, biblical church growth is anchored in a holistic perspective—Godward, churchward, and worldward. Both quantitative (numerical-evangelistic) and qualitative (nurture-worship) perspectives must be intentional. Worship is the important initial building block of dynamic congregational life, sustained and nurtured by Christian education. Worship is the short-term barometer of a church's health; education and nurture the long-term barometer (Easum, 1990:14).

Third, solid evangelistic growth will be most effective when it rises from a strong, healthy corporate church base, rather than predominantly from the effort of individual Christians. In other words, corporate witness is basic to personal witness.

Henry J. Schmidt is associate professor of world mission and director for the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Church plateaus and decline signal a change in the normal development of a healthy church. Plateaus are not inherently negative, that is, after rapid growth they may provide an important opportunity for consolidation and regrouping. However, when the pattern is prolonged over several years, they usually signal the need for change and refocused vision. While the causes for plateaus and decline may be related to internal factors (schisms, lack of vision, aging people/structures, staffing needs) or to external factors (overcrowded facilities, lack of parking, changing demographics), there are several basic characteristics of nongrowing churches. These traits tend to be more sociological and strategic rather than theological.

Researcher George Barna notes that nongrowing churches share common traits: 1) they act as God's protector (i.e., become turf-minded); 2) they suffer from a denial syndrome; 3) they treat visitors like a captive audience (i.e., are not geared to include the unchurched); 4) they serve as judge and jury toward the unchurched; 5) they fear confrontation; 6) they use confrontal evangelism strategies; 7) they hire staff by precedent rather than by need and in consideration of ministry to the unchurched; 8) they live in isolation from their community; and 9) they tend to avoid taking risks—safety, security, and survival become dominant values (Barna, 1990:13-15; Anderson, 1990:111-118).

After sixty-eight urban consultation meetings with church leaders around the world, Ray Bakke has similarly concluded that normally seventy to eighty percent of the barriers to evangelization "are created by church politics, policies, priorities, and personalities—not the big bad city itself" (1968:20). He specifically links the hindrances to urban evangelization to a lack of: organized prayer; properly trained leaders; vision, motivation, and burden for the lost; cooperation among churches; appropriate buildings and facilities; non-Christian contacts by Christians; and sensitivity to witnessing opportunities. Other obstacles include the "overbusyness" of Christians, the rural mentality of churches and pastors, and the leadership/generation gap in the church—leaders in the church or society between ages 30-45 are a minority. All of these characteristics fit the descriptions of inwardly focused, survival oriented, plateaued churches and denominations.

While there are two eternal factors which a local church has no control over—namely its age and environment—every congregation makes choices that impact its mission effectiveness. The following suggestions are not exhaustive but represent significant choices for expanding growth and moving churches beyond the plateau.

Five strategies for getting churches off plateaus

Clarify your purpose

The most important question for any church is "why?" Why do we exist? What is our purpose? Clarifying purpose begins with a renewed vision of what God calls the church to be. That vision is anchored in the spiritual dynamics of prayer, faith, fasting, sensitivity to the Spirit, and obedience in mission. Without a vision of who God is, there is no vision of the church as it could be. Robert Dale insists that churches will move away from plateaus and decline when they "begin to dream again" (1981) and implement ministry to "keep the dream alive" (1988). Visions look to the future, see things the way they could be, and motivate us to action.

Most churches and parachurches have a purpose statement which is often included in their constitution. Typical purpose statements are too long and unknown to most members. Since the church is a dynamic organism in constant change, every generation needs to work on this purpose statement in order to own it. The process of developing or revising a purpose statement can be a powerful catalyst for change. Good purpose statements answer the question "why?" They are brief enough to be remembered and understood by both insiders and outsiders.

Do a situation audit

An assessment should be both internal and external. Internally, the church must ask important diagnostic questions: Why do we exist? Who's in charge? Is our focus inward or outward? What is our history? How has change been handled in the past? What are our ministry strengths and competencies? What are our major weaknesses? What priorities does the church calendar and budget reflect? How are members mobilized for ministry? Where do people invest most of their ministry time? How do we welcome, track, and enfold new people? Are there nonnegotiable issues in our church?

Externally, the church must understand the people they seek to reach. What kind of people are they? What is their age, income, gender, marital status, religious preference, occupation, education level, political affiliation? Who is "my neighbor"? What needs are represented in the church's ministry area? Some information is readily accessible from census data, but the church must also interact with people, ask questions, and do a lot of listening. What do the unchurched think? What do they like and dislike? What are their fears? What are their dreams? What are their "felt needs"? What are their real needs?

Develop ministries that fit your context

Once a church knows a community—its specific people and needs—it can make important decisions about whom to serve and how to reach people. In urban centers, generic strategies and mass appeal are increasingly nonproductive. The clearer the target the more effective the strategy.

Once specific needs and people groups are identified, ministry must be molded accordingly. For example, if the ministry is to Hmongs, then their language must be learned. If one is to reach elderly retirees, the church buildings should not have steps and church programs should not be held during evening hours. If ministries are designed for young families with children, resources must go into nursery facilities and programs for preschoolers. It is important to develop outwardly focused ministries that are sensitive to specific peoples' needs and that present as few barriers as possible.

Plan to grow younger and larger rather than older and smaller

Most churches are concerned about families and desire to be intergenerational. While this is commendable, in reality as churches get older they become more "age-bound" in leadership, core values, style, and program. Unless established churches take deliberate steps to develop an outreach focus on younger families/singles, either through an integrated or specialist strategy, they will inevitably become "older and smaller" congregations.

Deliberate strategies for such churches could include some of the following:

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1. Develop Bible study classes for younger adults.
2. Add a worship service with a different style that appeals to the next generation.
3. Introduce several young adult classes designed to reach new members.
4. Daughter a new church. Schaller notes that new congregations draw members from the under-fifty age range (1990:75).
5. Focus several ministries for the societally conscious. It is estimated that 16 of the 77 million baby boomers in the United States are concerned with social justice and environmental issues.
6. Increase summer programming rather than plan for a slump. Two-thirds of family households (not one-person households) changing residences do so in the summer. June through early September constitutes one of three peak times for church shoppers looking for a new church home (Christmas Eve is second, Easter is third).
7. Develop a system of small groups as the major vehicle for congregational care, nurture, and the enfolding and assimilation of new people.
8. Place a high priority on children's programming; pay particular attention to having good nursery facilities and staffing.
9. Plan high visibility, event-oriented programs geared for the unchurched (for example, musicals, dramas, crafts fair, Hawaiian luau).
10. Expand the church music program to include community children and youth in choirs or small groups.
11. Initiate new outwardly focused ministries by training and mobilizing recent converts and members.

The above strategies focus intentionally on reaching the "missing generation." In the past several decades the major erosion in both mainline and evangelical churches has been people ages 20-40. Commonly referred to as "baby boomers" (born between 1946-64) and "baby busters" (born between 1964-77), they represent 31 percent of the North American population (8 million in Canada; 77 million in United States). Their sheer numbers—plus the fact that they represent a different generation in terms of motivating values, rearranged priorities, leadership styles, weaker relationships, tolerance for diversity, response to change, low loyalty, and high expectations—make them a formidable challenge for the church. According to Doug Murren they are nonjoiners, noninstitutional, experience-oriented, with a high level of dysfunctionality. They believe that women need to be represented in leadership, that singleness should be celebrated, and that they have a sense of destiny (1990:37-39).

Even though baby boomers are more educated, marry less and later, tend to have fewer children, and divorce more frequently, they are not disinterested in spiritual issues or the church. What is clear is that the church attempting to reach this group will have to be a different style. Tex Sample suggests that church programs aimed at reaching baby boomers must be intrinsically valuable, emotionally expressive, relationally focused, societally conscious, and event/action oriented (1990:33-35).

Be a user-friendly, guest-conscious church

What the late G. W. Peters said of Mennonite Brethren is common in many evangelical churches. "Our problem is not that our people are not evangelizing, but that our churches are unable to include and assimilate new people." While most churches proclaim themselves as being "friendly," the people who come as "outsiders" often have a different perception.

The deeper issues for Anabaptists/Mennonites in developing user-friendly, guest-conscious churches relate to ethnicity (mono-ethnic vs. multi-ethnic), size (single-cell vs. multi-cell), and structures (nurture systems vs. incorporation systems). There are basic questions that every church can address on a practical level. How are new people welcomed and invited into the church? What is their system for tracking and enfolding newcomers? How are they introduced to the church—its theology, philosophy of ministry, mission? Are worship services "seeker-sensitive"? Are there new classes for new people? How would guests like to be treated when they come to service? Left alone? Introduced? Who initiates personal contact with newcomers after a church visit? How and where are those contacts made? While the identification and tracking of guests may not be as complex for smaller or rural churches, it is a major issue in larger, urban churches. The question of incorporating, assimilating, and mobilizing new members is vital for plateaued/declining churches regardless of size or geographic location.

Keeping to God's agenda

Kennon Callahan makes the point that in an unchurched culture effective church leadership must be "proactive, relational, intentional and missional" (1990:144). The challenge facing Anabaptists/Mennonites as we approach century 21 is to keep on our agenda what is on God's agenda, namely, the multiplying of disciples, churches, and leaders. Plateaued and declining churches can be revitalized. However, change and new growth patterns will not happen without God's renewing Spirit, the refocusing of the church's vision, and the recommitment of God's people in global mission.

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Room for Each Other

BRICE BALMER

In an outreach or mission-oriented congregation, there must be room for movers/shakers and for tradition bearers who know how to respect each other and keep communicating. Congregations, like other organizations, need both foci: 1) a maintenance focus to keep alive important traditions and take care of routine functions, and 2) a creative cutting edge which welcomes new people and embraces new ideas. These two make up a healthy tension which keeps the church alive.

If the maintenance/tradition mode alone is allowed room to function, the congregation becomes dull, routine, and self-serving of its existing membership. Decreased attendance or membership can be expected. Many mainline downtown urban churches have tried to survive on maintenance and tradition models. They have not adjusted to the changing environment and shifting populations and are now declining both in membership and in influence and outreach.

In the mid-1960s, one prosperous Canadian church had a membership of 1500 members with full Sunday school classes, a new Christian education wing, and up-to-date facilities. Many city leaders were members of the congregation, and the senior pastor was involved in community activities. After sixteen years of leadership by a maintenance-oriented pastor who felt threatened by other pastoral staff and who worked only with members and committees within the church, the membership declined to 400. He became the lone pastor with a part-time secretary for the last five years before he retired.

Maintenance-oriented churches are often characterized by:

- lack of young adults;
- few new people joining the church;
- same members in leadership positions, sometimes just changing titles, and feeling like martyrs because they have to do so much of the work;
- lack of congregational involvement in local missions, peace, outreach, or justice activities; some may give money but have little personal involvement;
- sense that mission and outreach are for newer churches or are done through conference or denominational mission boards; they do not see the unchurched or socially disadvantaged in their communities or neighborhoods as their responsibility;
- concerns expressed at church councils focus on the safety and security of the building, why people are not participating in programs which have been going on for generations, or how to cut the budget and yet maintain the status quo.

One urban congregation had trouble opening their doors to community groups because Sunday school teachers wanted to leave their materials out from Sunday to Sunday. It would be too much work, the teachers felt, if the rooms were used during the week for a parenting class for low-income mothers who needed child care during the sessions. The mothers' group had to find another place for their activities. An outreach opportunity was wasted and important space was used only one hour per week.

But if the project or church emphasizes only new tradition, forgetting maintenance needs, there can be other problems such as continuous turnover in membership, a lack of focus, and an unreliable base of support and nurture. People become exhausted and burned out from a neverending series of crises, each time having to "reinvent the wheel."

New and constantly innovative congregations:

- tend to attract younger and more educated people;
- have a higher burn-out rate among members who feel overloaded by congregational needs and who find little time to meet personal goals and needs;
- take endless hours to "discern" the next steps because few traditions have been established;
- fail to be supportive of members' important life journey struggles because there are no patterns in place for pastoral care or community celebrations/rituals;
- offer little that is predictable for members and visitors;
- struggle with the budget because membership is small or new.

New urban churches may struggle for several years before any traditions and routines are established. One member of a new urban congregation admitted, "We'll begin inviting our friends when we become an established church." Although the church already had a building and a half-time pastor, it was still struggling to find its identity, trying many new things in worship, outreach, and church administration. Some members enjoyed the ferment and excitement; others longed for more routine and tradition.

Living with the tension of having movers and shakers as well as traditionalists and maintenance people is not easy, but it does keep the church alive both in its internal life and its mission and outreach. Movers and shakers may forget that maintenance and tradition-oriented members are strong budget supporters, want concrete ways to live out the gospel, can make lasting friendships with new people or will invite visitors to dinner, are more established in the community, make sure that the building is repaired and the administrative tasks are done, have strong links to the denomination, and have important wisdom from their knowledge of the congregation's history.

Maintenance and tradition-oriented members may forget that the movers and shakers bring new ideas; keep in touch with youth and young adults; are often good Sunday school teachers, actors, drama directors, artists, or musicians; like to be involved in outreach, peace, justice, and mission programs in the congregation and in the local community; and can help the church sense new trends in society, in theology, or in the city.

How can we as mover/shaker or maintenance/tradition members learn to respect each other and be convinced that we need a good mix of both within our congregation?

Brice Balmer is one of the pastors at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario. This article reflects on experiences at First Mennonite Church and a study of downtown mainline churches in Canadian cities.

We are not in a political battle to win control of the church, but we are different types of people needed to build the kingdom—and this particular congregation. We need to respect each other and to let the church use our strengths. The tension among us is healthy—in fact, much healthier than having a church of only one type.

Sometimes members may even change who they are in the congregation—depending on the role they are asked to play, how old they are, other tensions or stresses in their lives, or what particular congregational issue is being discussed.

How can congregations integrate both functions? It is possible. There are some important questions to ask about our congregations:

1. Is there a *gifts discernment* process in place where needs of committees or positions are compared with members' abilities and strengths? Along with this, it is important to look at the direction the committee or church is moving. Is this a time for new ideas or is it a time for maintenance? Should the church be reflective or start new projects? Personnel resources or gift discernment committees often set the direction for the future without realizing how important their decisions are.

The personnel committee might look at who is already appointed: Are both maintenance and creativity orientations present in congregational leadership? Sometimes the committee just hopes it can fill positions and may fail to see the purpose of taking time to evaluate the current makeup of leadership and what perspectives might be needed.

2. Are there particular boards or committees which are maintenance oriented or which do the creative work for the church? If the church is highly maintenance oriented, could a missions group or a peace and justice committee be encouraged to bring zest for change and new ideas? If the church is very "avant garde," could more tradition/maintenance members serve on the library, trustee, stewardship, or historical committees? Is creativity wanted in the worship life of the church?

3. Are leaders appointed for specific terms, so that turnover can allow different members to use their gifts in the congregation? Two- and three-year terms give room for change, especially if there is a six- or nine-year limit to service in any one position. On some personnel committees, members are identified by abilities or by assignments already held within the congregation. Are there new jobs these members can do? Are there some members who are not involved? What would they like to do within the church? Have they been asked?

4. Are busy leaders given one- or two-year sabbaticals after a particularly heavy assignment or responsibility? This avoids making martyrs of strong leaders and helps the congregation look at the gifts of others, rather than depending on the same "good people."

5. Are young adults asked to serve on committees and boards? The church expects them to be full members, to contribute, to participate, to assume leadership in a few years, and to be responsible. Young adults can offer new ideas and take more ownership of the church if they are included in important positions.

At First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario, the church council has included young adults for over fifteen years. Some young adults feel like they are just learning, but they are free to comment on issues, help with the specific tasks of the council, serve as delegates to conference meetings, and express how their peers and friends feel about issues. They are full members of council, not participant observers. They take their responsibility very seriously. Young adults are seen as an important resource for the church—whether single, married, or married with children. They serve on most committees; in fact, the congregation attempts to get a cross section of members on every committee and board. Young people are attracted to the church and many young adults stay involved in the church because their participation is significant and appreciated.

The "cutting edge" board for over twenty years at First Mennonite Church has been the mission and service board. It is expected to work on new programs and initiatives. Some important new church programs have included the senior citizens' group, the congregational student aid programs, use of the church building by outside groups, resettlement of Hmong and Central American refugees, assistance in beginning the Hmong congregation, a recycling and sharing table, participation in downtown Kitchener ministries (soup kitchen, hostel for persons with mental or emotional problems), recruiting volunteers/VSers for local projects and service agencies, integrating Hispanic participants in the congregation, ushering and greeting for Sunday morning. The board recently split, so the congregation now has the mission and service board and the refugee and Hispanic ministries board. Though other boards are innovative and creative, this one is expected to start new things within the congregation.

Two local churches have Sunday school classes that are beginning new ventures in the church. A peace and justice class has focused specific issues for the congregation and has begun to work on them with other city people and groups. These issues include supporting campaigns against war toys, assessing the impact of a military-industrial complex within the city, and beginning the Sabbath Monday celebrations during the Persian Gulf War. There is now a missions staff person who works with the missions committee, the peace and justice group, and other community organizations.

Another congregation's Sunday school class studied the book of Acts and church growth. The class looked at their town, which was becoming a suburb of Kitchener, and recommended that the congregation hire a member to nurture those members working in church and community agencies as well as to reach out to new residents of the village. The church accepted and implemented the concept. The building is now used by community groups, new people are joining the church, and the missions staff person—as well as other members—know most citizens in the village. Creativity is part of the mix in this congregation.

The purpose of this essay is not to put forth another technique for church growth, but to help us live with a tension/paradox that will keep our congregations alive. We need maintenance and tradition; we need creativity and spontaneity. Our members and our church structures need to allow both to flourish and to be respected within our congregations.

Approaches to Assessment of Potential Church Planters

DAVID PAULOVICH

One of the Vision '95 witness goals stated that the Mennonite Church would work toward "adding more than 500 strong congregations of caring disciples and experiencing overall membership growth exceeding 50 percent in North America."

As a result, congregations and conferences have enlisted help from sister conferences, church agencies, and other denominational and ecumenical resources to identify appropriate church planting personnel. Meetings were scheduled to provide leadership in clarifying goals and initiating gift discernment to find persons skilled to minister in emerging church situations. Some of these early church planting efforts have flourished, and some have floundered. The questions surfaced: "Are there effective ways to identify potential church planters? What characteristics are needed?"

Identifying potential church planters

Listening to word-of-mouth recommendations and suggestions of persons who demonstrate good working relationships within the congregation is one helpful method. Some candidates are recommended because of their effectiveness in bringing people together in a particular congregation. Ministerial profiles, application forms, curriculum vitae, interviews, and conversations all contribute to the discernment of potential church planters. Workshops were developed to identify the qualities, necessary skills, and perceptions important for persons called to establish growing and dynamic congregations.

Although these tools seemed to improve the personnel placement retention and church growth, it seemed evident that additional work was needed in the selection process.

In an early response to this need, Mennonite Board of Missions personnel developed a taped interview method for church planter candidates. Descriptive concepts were identified, questions were written, and norms were developed. Fourteen concepts were evaluated in the taped interview: mission sense, human resource and spiritual development, rapport drive, arranger, listener, group enhancer, servanthood, faith, ambiguity, tolerance, focus, communicator, work orientation, organization, and community sensitivity. Candidates taped their responses to specific questions read to them. These responses were evaluated by a panel of trained listeners, who discerned the proximity of the candidate responses to the established norms. Observations, scoring, and recommendations for potential placement were reported to the sponsoring leadership, who then continued their processing with the candidate. Success with the taped interview varied depending on the candidate's ease with the taping process, the reader's unsolicited coaching, the quality of tapes, and the significant time involved in the entire process.

David Paulovich, who lives in Goshen, Indiana, and works at Mennonite Board of Missions as personnel counselor, has worked closely with the church planting discernment process.

Ridley Model

Another method used is based on the Ridley Church Planter Profile interview procedure, developed by Charles Ridley of Fuller Theological Seminary. This process features an in-depth interview to evaluate the presence of thirteen behavioral characteristics: has visionizing capacity, is intrinsically motivated, creates ownership of ministry, relates to the unchurched, has spousal cooperation, effectively builds relationships, is committed to church growth, is responsive to the community, utilizes the giftedness of others, is flexible and adaptable, builds group cohesiveness, displays resilience, and exercises faith. The Ridley Church Planter Profile considers that past behavioral characteristics are the best criteria to predict future behavior. To be considered a strong church planting candidate, Ridley advises, persons must clearly exhibit the first five characteristics.

During the in-depth interview, the candidate responds to open-ended questions designed to evoke life stories and experiences. One of the behavioral characteristics, for example, is spousal cooperation. The candidate may be asked to describe an experience in which the candidate and spouse solved a problem or worked together at a particular issue. The interviewer asks clarifying questions and probes the candidate to be specific about their roles, functions, mannerisms, and actions in the experience. This or similar experiences are explored until the interviewer has an accurate perception of how the candidate and spouse cooperate in problem solving.

At the conclusion of the interview, the stories, perceptions, and summary comments are condensed into a written report. Interviewers unfamiliar with the Ridley approach may need to gain skills for listening, questioning, and reporting. Clearly the procedure and style of gathering and reporting is developed and refined as interviewers gain experience in the process. Below are samples of improvement in the reporting efforts. The behavior characteristic explored here is "exercises faith," and the score is based on a 0-5 scale, with a 5 being best.

Example A "Dan faced a difficult church situation and handled it creatively. Score 4.5."

Example B "Dan and Marcia struggled with an attendance problem in the congregation. Yielding to an unfamiliar style of leadership resulted in a new and positive effect. This was a turning point in their ministry. Score 4.5."

Example C "There was a particular time in Ecuador where Dan and Marcia experienced a low point in their faith. Attendance [in the church] was declining: many young people were not attending services. It was Sunday morning. Dan decided that, rather than preach, he would call the congregation to prayer. This was a new experience in which Dan 'relinquished' the church to the Lord. 'It is not my church but God's.' He became aware that God gave him boldness that was unnatural for him at that time. That was the turning point in Dan and Marcia's ministry.

Evaluation: Dan and Marcia both have a deep commit-

ment to ministry and the church. Their desire is to bring honor to Christ through their ministry. They desire to strengthen other persons and bring them into relationship with Christ and the church. Score 4.5"

A complete interview, which normally takes three to five hours, is summarized in a five- to seven-page report. Under each behavioral characteristic, stories are summarized, and written comments by the interviewer assess the candidate's skills. The interview report together with an application form and references give a fairly comprehensive assessment. These materials are sent to the sponsoring church or conference for feedback to the candidate. Some sponsors give the materials directly to the candidate as a part of ongoing discussion. Other sponsors review these reports and then provide a personalized discussion time with the candidate in which affirmations and issues are raised.

Learnings and evaluations

Benefits of the interview process

To date, more than twenty-five interviews have been conducted by Mennonite agencies using the Ridley Church Planter Profile. Most of these are completed in conjunction with a one-hour session reviewing the Myers-Briggs and Taylor-Johnson psychological inventories. Church planting profiles have been helpful in affirming church planters, or in identifying potential church planters who need additional preparation. Other candidates recognize that church planting is not for them but find skills and interests in pastoring and other ministering roles.

The interview technique has additional benefits. Personal life concerns and new parameters of awareness are often realized through the interview process. Candidates express appreciation for the "fresh air" experienced by awareness of new insights, freedom to talk about vague issues and to probe formerly undiscerned concepts and unsurfaced concerns. Often tearful expressions of joy—and acknowledgment of aching shoulders or neck muscles—attest to the emotional, mental, and physical work experienced in this interview format. Care must be maintained not to confuse these interviews with therapy.

Issues raised in an interview can be returned to in a follow-up interview or can be addressed in ongoing supervisory activities. The interviewer covers issues related not only to church planting but to pastoral ministry in general. By broaching a wide variety of topics and gaining personal support in the process, communications can pick up specific areas as helpfully appropriate. I have had follow-up interviews at several church planting sites, and would recommend a follow-up interview with each church planter every three to five years.

Helpful spinoffs of the interview process

Church Planter Discernment Days events and the development of a Ministering Characteristics Self-Assessment instrument have been helpful spin-offs as a result of the Ridley interview method.

The Church Planter Discernment Days bring potential church planters together for evaluation of their gifts. In addition to the interview process, these days allow participants to interact with others who have similar goals as a way of testing their perceptions and hopes. This event reflects district conference support and interest in the discernment process.

The Ministering Characteristics Self-Assessment tool asks candidates to give objective feedback in various behavioral characteristic areas and pastoral abilities. By participating in this self-assessment prior to the profile interview or Church Planter Discernment Days, more detailed conversations take place during the in-depth interviews and among the attendees. This instrument can provide a basis for detecting growth or need for ongoing supervisory meetings.

The approach and format of this in-depth interview method lends itself not only to assessment of church planters, but also to general missionary workers, pastors and other ministering persons, church administrators—positions where vision, team building, and personal preparation are key components. Congregations are encouraged to identify skilled persons to conduct in-depth interviews as part of their gift discernment process. Conference use of this methodology prepares them to recommend candidates for church-wide roles, voluntary service, or international ministry.

The interview method is well suited for identifying persons for positions within the congregation. Listening carefully during formal or informal storytelling is a clue to how and why people choose and exhibit certain behaviors. Strong patterns exhibited in the past give clues to potential creativity in facing new problems. Often in times of deep pain and difficult interactions, special giftedness is forged for the tasks in which God calls his people to share. Sensitive, listening persons in the congregation can tap other members on the shoulder and encourage their use of gifts to draw new persons into the emerging, growing body of Christ.

Unresolved struggles need to be considered

The central task of the in-depth interview is to hear the candidate's story—their specific actions, discussion, and participation in a situation—rather than theologizing, generalizing, and summarizing these events. The interviewer's primary challenge is to keep the candidate on course. Sometimes it takes considerable effort. In some cases, candidates are not prepared to be specific about personal events. Whether they choose to be protective, have not given much thought to past events, or are unclear about the interview expectations is not always clear. An interviewer should coach the person through several characteristics until they realize what is expected.

Occasionally interview reports are criticized when deeper issues previously known by sponsors have not been referred to or detected in the interview process. The comparatively short span of the interview and the select material provided by the candidate as background information do impose limitations on the instrument. The skills of inquiry, observation, and listening by the interviewer are strongly tested. Sponsoring conference leaders are encouraged to state particular issues, background information, or identifiable concerns where such information could be helpful to the interview process.

The church planter interview and discernment is labor intensive. However, the feedback and improved benefits of the experience seem to outweigh the demands. Persons who conduct interviews are required to continue developing their skills. A considerable amount of time is required to gather background information (personnel application, references, psychological tests), a minimum of three to five hours for interviewing, plus time for assimilating, interpreting, writing, and implementing the report. More qualified, committed persons are needed to conduct these interviews and communicate the results to

candidates. Conference leaders and pastors are needed for shoulder tapping and recommending as well as referring persons for the evaluation profile. The church can make no less an investment for the calling and placement of its leadership.

Ongoing concerns

We have quickly learned that assessing church planters is only one facet in the process; matching candidates to sites for the emerging churches is also important. Each church planting site requires specific skills, unique expertise, and key gifts. The candidate likewise has particular quirks and needs; the situation at one site may lend itself to producing growth, another site may experience the opposite. An important factor may be the quality, frequency, and style of supervision available once the candidate is placed at the site.

The Ridley Church Planting Profile method is an approach applicable to congregations, conferences, and churchwide agencies as one step in the identification and affirmation of potential church planters. The interview technique can be broadly applied to other ministering and leadership roles. The immediate and long-range benefits of this process are just beginning to be realized.

Case Study: Another Congregation in Mennoland?

Gary E. Martin

Mennonites in Elkhart County, Indiana, have averaged starting a new congregation every thirty-one months since 1940.[1] Biological and transfer growth has enabled at least four starts in every decade through the 1970s. The pace, however, slowed in the 1980s with only one start, creating the longest gap between new beginnings since the 1920s. The average adult membership in these 19 newer congregations is 114.

Although new church development is widely recognized as one of the most effective evangelization strategies, adult conversion growth has been minimal in most of these new starts. Why has it not worked well for Mennonites in Elkhart County? The answer is complex, involving a variety of issues. One of these is the principle that the evangelistic potential of a new church is usually determined by what takes place before the first public worship service is held.

Taking into account this principle, the past track record, and a conservative estimate that 8,000 Goshen residents do not attend church regularly, it seemed appropriate to at least consider starting another congregation.

The story

Over the years several women at Assembly Mennonite Church developed significant relationships with neighbors and with persons they met through various social service efforts. They experienced limited success in their attempts to assimilate these persons who were not attending church into congregational life. In 1986 a small group formed to pray and discern. A Vision '95 task force encouraged this group to give leadership to evangelistic outreach by the congregation. The small group grew through evangelistic efforts and including others who shared the emerging vision, and eventually divided into two cell groups.

The first step involved clarifying the vision: communicating the good news and inviting persons to join the kingdom movement by following Christ and participating in a community of faith became the unifying factor. Participants knew this involved responding in holistic ways to the needs of individuals and to systemic concerns.

Gary E. Martin is instructor in evangelism and church planting at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

The next step dealt with how this could best be accomplished. Should persons be assimilated into either of the two Assembly clusters? Should a third cluster be formed? Or should a separate congregation be established? Assembly did not want to lose the evangelistic influence of the new group, but at the same time was reluctant to consider changes which would encourage assimilation of new believers. The leadership philosophy, organizational structure, and worship vocabulary assumed high levels of formal education and a churched background.

The first option was eventually eliminated, in part due to a mutual recognition that the required changes would be a major departure from Assembly's original vision and current mission, and the fact that both clusters were already larger than originally envisioned. The new group was divided on the third cluster option. As a clearer strategy developed, freedom to contextualize this new ministry became a priority. A church was being built for others, not primarily for those already in the group. Assembly Mennonite affirmed the vision for a new congregation in 1989.

The third step involved a commitment to an alternative strategy for church planting. A critical mass of fifty persons was desired before weekly corporate worship began; half of these should be persons who had not been attending church. The initial priority would be evangelistic ministry through small groups rather than developing a weekly corporate worship identity. When a new church begins with a publicly announced worship service, it is easy to lose the focus on evangelistic growth and rely upon transfer growth.

Contrary to popular thought, pastoral leadership is essential for the small group development phase so that evangelization continues to be the priority. Significant ministry should always precede the setting up of structures. If structures are established first, they will tend to hinder rather than support ministry. Pastoral leadership plays an important role in setting this direction. Faith Mennonite Church, as it came to be called, experienced its first funeral, wedding, and baptisms before it had a name, membership, or weekly worship service.

The fourth step involved securing pastoral leadership. A church planting pastor began half-time employment in

1989. His part-time work as a machinist and his blue collar background was extremely helpful in establishing initial evangelistic contacts and in bridging the significant cultural gaps in the developing church. Two small group leaders joined with him to form a temporary leadership team. During the fourth year of the vision, a third group formed. To begin to develop a corporate identity, an informal worship service and fellowship meal was held twice a month at 5:00 p.m. in the Assembly meetingplace. Previously unchurched persons attended regularly and participated in worship planning and leading.

When weekly worship began in the summer of 1990, attendance was averaging fifty; about forty percent had not been attending church. A mission statement and congregational name were finalized a few weeks before weekly worship began in the first congregational meeting. Charter membership was established on September 23, 1990. New participants were integrally involved in all of these events.

After a year of weekly worship the church family numbers around seventy; almost half are children and youth, and most live within three miles of the meetingplace. Attendance averages forty. Four small groups are functioning. Three more adult baptisms have taken place. The Holy Spirit is creating community in the midst of a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds: professionals, factory workers, and persons with limited financial resources. Many are sharing in the evangelistic and discipling efforts. Most new persons have come through natural networks of relatives, friends, neighbors, or work associates.

Faith Mennonite Church has also provided experiential learning for a number of seminary students, including potential church planters. Nearby congregations have observed its development and have been encouraged in strengthening their outreach efforts.

Alternative methods are being tested. Many new churches start with Sunday morning worship time as a second choice. Faith Mennonite Church is pioneering the 5:00-7:30 p.m. time period as a permanent arrangement to reduce long-term facility costs and because it seems to be a good time for persons who have not been in the habit of attending church. (Even some of the faithful church attenders admit that they prefer sleeping in!) The weekly fellowship meal strengthens relationships in the new community while it also provides basic nutritional needs for some with limited financial resources.

Evangelism and discipling work is slow and challenging, especially when it is crossing significant cultural barriers. In the end Faith Mennonite Church's story may not be that different from many of the other nineteen new congregational starts in the last fifty years. But as it begins, there have been significant attempts to learn from the past and to take seriously the surrounding culture. It represents one example of local congregational mission which is attempting to be holistic and in tune with the needs of the community:

> The mission of Faith Mennonite Church is to help each other grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ, walking together through times of joy and difficulty. As a community of Christians, we seek to glorify God in worship, to follow Jesus Christ as disciples and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We invite into our family of faith those with no local church home, and we welcome others who share this mission.

Notes

1. All references to Mennonite include the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Resources for Congregational Mission
A SPECIAL REVIEW SECTION

Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys. By Kennon L. Callahan. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990, 268 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Walfred J. Fahrer

Rarely does a book come along which combines insightful analysis of the culture with practical insights on pastoral leadership. When these are tied to a strong mission focus, a challenge of the status quo, and a direction for the future, the results are impressive.

In the first section of the book, the challenge is stated in three central convictions: 1) that the professional minister has been trained to focus internally on the program of the church rather than outwardly on mission; 2) that we no longer live in a culture where people seek out the church for meaning and values but instead regard it as largely irrelevant; and 3) that we must shift the focus of pastoral ministry from church to mission field.

The second section of the book critiques the popular leadership styles of manager, boss, enabler, and charismatic inspirer. The author considers the historical reasons for these styles, their strengths and flaws. He concludes that none of them is adequate for the future and points to another model which he calls "missional leadership."

The third section identifies four significant cultural trends and the sense of need which emerges from them. These become the challenges of the mission pastor to understand and respond to. The final section focuses on leadership development. To call and train this new kind of leader, even denominational structures must change. Included in this section is a very pointed critique on our traditional pastoral evaluation process, which he finds destructive.

In his conclusion the author calls for congregations which have a mission focus from the beginning. He asserts that denominations are declining because their traditional constituency is declining. The answer is to focus on reaching the unchurched rather than the churched. This charts a bold new course for the next century of church leadership.

Walfred J. Fahrer, Goshen, Indiana, is minister of mission for the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Earlier he and his wife served with Mennonite Board of Missions in London, England.

U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches: A Key to Reaching People in the 90's. By Tex Sample. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, 171 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Gary E. Martin

Within a few months of publication, this book by Tex Sample was quoted widely. Sample is professor of church and society at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri. He provides the reader with an informative picture of the complex cultural context which confronts the American church today.

He begins by addressing the major shift in values that took place around World War II: from an ethic of self-denial to an ethic of self-fulfillment. A foundational question is

raised: can self-denial churches reach the self-fulfillment baby boom generation? The economic reversal of the 1980s has both complicated the pursuit of self-fulfillment and created significant ministry opportunities.

The main content of this book provides an analysis of three distinct cultures in the U.S.: left, right, and middle. Each culture is addressed by describing three subcultures within the broad category, by proposing basic strategic ministry principles, and by developing a unique theology for each culture. An example from his discussion of the cultural right is provocative: he is convinced that "those of us trained in universities and seminaries are socialized into a way of relating to the world that makes us unfit for working on the cultural right."

He concludes by addressing the challenge of including two or all three cultures in one congregation and presenting his synthesis of H. Richard Niebuhr's discussion of Christ and culture relationships: Christ in culture transforming culture. "To love Christ, and to love the neighbor in whom Christ comes, is to respect the journey over which the neighbor has come, to appreciate the struggles to make and keep life together, and not to miss the failure or the pain of those who seem to have it made. In the midst of all these, we can trust that the Spirit of Christ is there and that the work of transformation is already under way" (p. 154).

U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches should be required reading for church leaders involved in mission strategy in the United States at any level: congregation, conference, or denomination.

Gary E. Martin, resident of Goshen, Indiana, is instructor in evangelism and church planting at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart. Gary is also guest editor of this ***Mission Focus*** *issue on congregational mission.*

The Logic of Evangelism. By William J. Abraham. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989, 245 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Jerry Truex

Evangelism is not simply proclamation of the gospel nor is it merely church growth. Rather, argues Abraham, evangelism is any activity that intends to initiate people into the kingdom of God. The concept of the reign of God through history provides a "logic" for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to evangelism. So conceived, it includes communal, cognitive, moral, experiential, operational, and disciplinary components.

Abraham, a Methodist scholar, courageously fleshes out these dimensions. For example, he believes that evangelism could include instruction in the Nicene Creed, provision for practicing the classical spiritual disciplines, and introduction to the works of the Spirit. Such holistic evangelism is "more like farming or educating than like raising one's arm or blowing a kiss" (p. 104).

Abraham's concern is to locate evangelism squarely in the life and ministry of the church. He is concerned that new and potential converts have a balanced and complete entrance into the rich dimensions of the Christian tradition. In view of teleevangelism and other forms of modern evangelism, Abraham's approach appears as a prophetic corrective.

Where Abraham engenders difficulty, however, is not in the general direction or intention of his proposal, but in specific details. For example, I feel that he does not adequately display the connection between the various dimensions selected and his governing concept of the kingdom of God. Or again, his argument for selecting the Nicene Creed over the wealth of New Testament confessions is less than convincing. Nevertheless, I would gladly recommend Abraham's book as offering a needed and comprehensive perspective on evangelism and discipleship.

Jerry Truex is a third year student at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Cities: Mission's New Frontier. By Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989, 321 pp., $18.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Henry J. Schmidt

The stated purpose of this volume is "to provide students and practitioners of Christian missions with a basic introductory textbook for urban ministry" (p. xi). Roger S. Greenway, professor of world mission at Calvin Theological Seminary and executive director of Christian Reformed World Ministries, and Timothy S. Monsma, executive director of the Institute for Global Urban Studies, bring over thirty years of combined urban ministry experience to the subject. Both have served as missionaries in Latin America and Africa respectively, so they offer a global overview of urban missions.

After laying a solid biblical foundation for urban missions, the authors address many practical and strategic dimensions of ministry in the city. Five chapters focus on the need for a holistic perspective, demonstrated ideally by the church in Antioch (evangelism, relief, development, and church planting), and currently by the rapid growth of urban slums globally and the increase of urban poor, homeless street people, and victimized prostitutes in "Christian" America. Four chapters are devoted to the "ethnic mosaic of North American cities," and to the barriers, goals, and models in developing church-centered ethnic outreach.

Chapter 9 provides a helpful and graphic illustration of the exploding urban populations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In several chapters the authors outline the social systems of the city (social groups and ethnic groups as intersecting veins) and the struggle with church-state relationships in urban mission. Chapters 11-13 provide helpful guidelines for evangelism research, stages in church development, and a variety of current urban church models from cities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The last three chapters speak to the practical issues of raising a family in the city, the pros and cons of church buildings, and the challenge of pastoring in the city.

The strengths of the book are its global perspective, its emphasis on holistic urban ministry, its current data base on global urbanization trends, and its comprehensive 53-page bibliography, divided by continent and with a separate mission and social science perspective. Although the book states an intent not to "duplicate what is already available in other volumes," several chapters are an updated version of chapters in Greenway's earlier book, *Apostles to the City*, and include articles previously printed in *Urban Mission*. While the volume does address several specific target groups for urban mission (i.e., street people, prostitutes, the poor, ethnic groups), it offers little help in evangelization strategies involving small groups/house churches, the exploding youth populations, and the increasing high rise/multiple family dwellers.

Pastors, church leaders, missionaries, and seminarians will find this book useful as an introductory text to global urban mission. Discussion questions are placed at the end of each chapter to facilitate the book's use in classroom and small group discussions.

Henry J. Schmidt is associate professor of world mission and director of the Center for Training in Mission/Evangelism at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California.

America's Only Hope: Impacting Society in the 90's. By Anthony T. Evans. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1990, 168 pp., $14.99.

Reviewed by Noel Santiago

"Only a spiritual reformation led by the church on the basis of biblical authority can save our nation from its moral decay," says Anthony Evans.

In part one Evans looks at the problems of our society and the failure of the church as a corporate entity to effectively impact society. In part two he writes from the premise that a solution does exist and outlines what that is by setting in perspective the proper role and function of the church. Part three looks at problematic areas in society and gives concrete examples of how to impact society.

The greatest challenge for the Western mind will be to find ways to understand and experience what Evans is talking about. In our culture science and precision tend to dominate over a correct understanding and engagement in spiritual warfare and supernatural dynamics. This

is not to put one over the other, rather the latter must be the foundation of the first.

Evans is the senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas, and president of The Urban Alternative, a ministry which promotes a clear understanding and relevant application of Scripture to bring about changes in urban communities through the church.

The challenge for the Western church is to rise and take its proper place by being what God wants it to be.

Noel Santiago is a consultant in evangelism and church development for Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana.

Turning to God: Biblical Conversion in the Modern World. By David F. Wells. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989, 160 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

This book is the product of a consultation sponsored by the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship and the Theological Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. David Wells summarizes and interprets the proceedings of this international work group. The foreword notes the six areas around which the consultation and presentations were organized.

The book is given a polemical tone by pitting the "evangelical" position against other Christian traditions, particularly "the nonevangelical position of the Protestant world, as that subset of Protestants comes to expression in the World Council of Churches." Wells acknowledges that not all Protestants in the WCC are "nonevangelicals" but fails to recognize that within WCC circles there is no uniform position on conversion. He does not cite the excellent biblical study of conversion by Paul Loeffler while the latter was on the WCC staff in the 1960s nor the solid contributions of others in conciliar circles to the theme of conversion. This is merely to recognize that there is more openness to debate of these questions than the reader would infer from Wells' account.

I am grateful for the biblical study of conversion which forms the heart of the book (chapter 1). The term "conversion" is used only a few times in the Bible. Were the theme to depend on a single term and its limited function in Scripture, it would not exert much influence. However, repentance and "turning to God" are essential to biblical faith. Chapter 2 addresses the theme of "insiders," like Paul who had a decisive experience on the road to Damascus but who was not conscious of ever being away from God, or like children who grow up in the faith community and embrace the faith in a self-conscious decision. The third chapter surveys what might be called the psychology of conversion, "How and Why We Turn." Chapter 4 considers the church's views of conversion in several historical periods. Chapters 5-7 are devoted to "religious outsiders," including Jews and Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, and materialists.

The bibliography includes many useful listings but does not cite the important bibliographic survey of the topic by Lewis Rambo.

This book can serve as a convenient overview of evangelical thinking about conversion in the late twentieth century. It also illustrates how the proceedings from a conference can be made more accessible and useful to the general reader than a compendium of conference papers and proceedings which usually remain disparate and unintegrated.

Wilbert R. Shenk, editor of ***Mission Focus,*** *is director of the Mission Training Center located at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.*

Mastering Outreach and Evangelism. By Calvin Ratz, Frank Tillapaugh, and Myron Augsburger. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1990, 168 pp., $12.95.

Reviewed by Gary E. Martin

This is the third volume in the Mastering Ministries Series copublished by *Leadership, Christianity Today,* Inc., and Multnomah Press. Calvin Ratz, with ministry experience in Hong Kong, Kenya, Montreal, and Edmonton, currently pastors Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly in Abbotsford, British Columbia. Bear Valley Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado, has grown from forty to 1,200 during the nineteen-year pastorate of Frank Tillapaugh. Myron Augsburger, who pastors Washington Community Fellowship, Washington, D.C., and is president of the Christian College Coalition, has had a variety of ministry experiences as educator, pastor, and evangelist.

The strength of this book rests in the extensive and diverse pastoral ministry experiences of the three authors. Each writes four chapters distributed throughout three sections: preparation, structures, and strategies. Outreach and evangelism principles and illustrations from three unique congregations can bring conflicting messages at times. Not to worry, says editor Mark Galli, for the common denominator is a passion for outreach: "Using the Bible as an uncompromising foundation, these men have effectively employed the capital their situation handed them. They are, in the best sense of the term, missionary entrepreneurs" (p. 168).

Tillapaugh's chapters are most challenging of the status quo in both traditional congregations and recent church growth emphases. One example is his critique of extensive investment in real estate. His chapter on four spheres of outreach provides a helpful framework for the local congregation as it considers beginning or expanding its outreach efforts. Most of this content can be found in his previously published books.

Ratz's honesty in sharing his own struggle with modeling evangelism is refreshing. Augsburger addresses an issue which is often neglected in church growth literature: evangelistic preaching. His chapter on maintaining momentum is helpful in presenting unconventional ways of measuring success.

Perhaps best viewed as a primer, this book will motivate and stimulate church leaders with minimal outreach expertise to pursue more extensive resources. It stands out among the many primers because it integrates an entrepreneurial spirit with kingdom values.

Gary E. Martin is instructor in evangelism and church planting at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. In a previous assignment, Gary served the Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church as church development consultant.

Other congregational mission resources

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1988 *Bringing Your Church Back to Life: Beyond Survival Mentality.* Valley Forge: Judson Press.

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Costas, Orlando E.
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1990 *The Church Growth Handbook.* Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Stutzman, Ervin R.
1990 *Welcome! A Biblical and Practical Guide to Receiving New Members.* Scottdale: Herald Press.

Tillapaugh, Frank R.
1982 *Unleashing the Church: Getting People Out of the Fortress and into Ministry.* Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

Wenger, A. Grace and Dave and Neta Jackson
1989 *Witness Empowering the Church.* Scottdale: Herald Press.

In Review

A World Without Tyranny: Christian Faith and International Politics. By Dean C. Curry. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990, 256 pp., $9.95 (pb)

Reviewed by John A. Lapp

Dean Curry, associate professor of political science at Messiah College, proposes "to articulate a Christian theology of international politics and to relate that theology to the application of biblical principles in the arena of global politics." He divides the twelve chapters into three sections: the state of the world; international relations and the Bible; tyranny, freedom, and Christianity. The third section is more than half the book.

There is probably no agenda fraught with more controversy than this one. Part of the problem is how to deal with contemporary affairs amidst fast-paced events. Iraq, which has dominated the news since August 1990, is only briefly referred to here and that case primarily as a bulwark against the anarchical Shiites of Iran. Oil, the lubricant of the modern economic engine, as with most other economic issues of international relations, doesn't enter the vocabulary of this book at all.

Add to this the very explicit point of view Curry promotes when it comes to a theological framework. His main concern is to call for a worldly Christianity in tune with "America's sense of uniqueness and moral mission." Since "sin's effects are seen in the perpetual conflict between nations," he tries to demonstrate the inadequacies of other worldly Christianities that might call for justice, peace, and power at the expense of Western-oriented democracy, representative government, freedom, and capitalism. Curry is very suspicious of any variant of Marxism, liberation theology, socialism, and the Soviet Union, even under Gorbachev. The world tends to be seen in sharp categories of freedom and tyranny. These tend to be geographically as well as politically distinguishable.

The issues addressed in this book are critical for the faithful church. "The new crusaders," as the American troops are called in Saudi Arabia, suggests that any serious missiology must take seriously a political ethic and geo-political analysis. Unfortunately, Curry's focus is more American than global or churchy. Glenn Tinder in his *Political Meaning of Christianity* (1989) is much more helpful when he concludes: "Christians who share whole-heartedly in the self-righteousness of a nation or the conceit of a race have, at least for the moment, suspended their faith ... For a prophetic conscience, the stark absence of peace and justice in the world constitutes a call for global transformation."

John A. Lapp is executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania. He was previously professor of history and academic dean of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

The Sociological Perspective: A Value-Committed Introduction. Edited by Michael R. Leming, Raymond G. DeVries, Brendan F. J. Furnish. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989, 212 pp., $14.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Paul Hiebert

This is a refreshing compilation of articles written by leading Christian sociologists at Christian colleges and seminaries in the U.S. The eleven authors are not afraid to ask tough questions raised by sociology, such as determinism, the social basis of knowledge and faith, systemic inequality, morality and deviance, alienation, and cultural differences. Nor do they give simplistic answers. Each attempts to provide a Christian response that is sociologically sound.

The authors show how the integration of values—especially Christian values—and sociological insights can add to the field of sociology. The result is an excellent textbook for Christians teaching sociology. By raising the critical questions and pointing to possible answers, the authors further the dialogue between theology and the social sciences.

The work is of particular importance for believers with a free church perspective, because we take the social dimensions of Christianity seriously—namely, the church as a community of faith. But we must, therefore, answer tough sociological questions. What is the relationship between an individual, a community, and faith? How should the church relate to the social orders around it? How can Christians organize families in which the dignity of each member is affirmed? Is sin present in our corporate human systems? This volume helps us think through some of the basic issues involved and how sociology can help us understand our human situation.

Paul G. Hiebert is currently teaching sociology/anthropology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification: 1860-1920. By Jonathan J. Bonk. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989, 470 pp., $79.95.

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

Here is a book by a missionary for missionaries. The author, who served with the Sudan Interior Mission in Ethiopia, is now professor of mission studies at Winnipeg Bible College and Theological Seminary in Otterburne, Manitoba.

This book investigates one of the earliest missional principles on record, namely, missionary identification, or the intentional endeavor of missionaries to adapt their behavior and message to the lifeway of the people among whom they serve.

Bonk's point of departure is Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: "Though I am free and belong to no man, I made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." In the missionizing task it is essential to cross linguistic, social, religious, and cultural frontiers to make the message most effective. "I do all this for the sake of the gospel," Paul says, "that I may share in its blessings." The cost of this principle is overshadowed by its goal: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might win some," both Jews and Gentiles. Bonk applies this time-transcending principle as a test to the modern missionary era.

The scope of his study is clear: 1) it focuses on the policy and personnel of the London Missionary Society; 2) its historical time span is from 1860 to 1920; 3) the regional contexts are Central Africa and Central China; 4) it tests missionaries' capacities in linguistic, material-social, political-economic, and religious-educational spheres.

Bonk examines missionary performance in each of these "spheres" against the mode of operation agreed upon by conferences in Liverpool in 1860, London in 1888, New York in 1900, and Edinburgh in 1910, and against the policies set by the London Missionary Society. While LMS missionaries in Central Africa are credited with only "modest linguistic accomplishments," those in Central China have distinguished themselves in this particular "sphere." Readers will want to discover for themselves how the missionaries fared and compared in the religious-educational, political-economic, or material-social spheres.

Bonk can hardly be faulted for lack of thoroughness in his investigation; he also seeks to be objective and charitable in his assessments. But he deals with a critical subject wrapped in a nutty thesis, namely, "that Protestant missionary identification was severely truncated by the powerful press and pull of its own Eurocentrism, and by their self-conscious awareness that they were the embodiment of European superiority in all spheres of human endeavor." The missionaries "were children of a particular time ... and a special place," says Bonk. "While retaining an identity in some ways unique, [they] nevertheless revealed that unmistakable affinity to their European progenitors which heredity and environment contrive to produce in all offspring."

This is a book for mission teachers, historians, and leaders. It is informative and provocative; it is inspirational and motivational. Bonk leads readers not only to reflection and introspection, but also to a concession: We, too, are children of our time as our forebears were of theirs. That can help us to speak honestly about their accomplishments and charitably about their failures.

Hans Kasdorf is professor of world mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Transculturation: The Cultural Factor in Translation and Other Communication Tasks. By R. Daniel Shaw. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1988, 300 pp., $9.94 (pb)

Reviewed by Jacob A. Loewen

Daniel Shaw takes a courageous first step to meet a serious need, namely, to make the insights of cultural anthropology as useful to Bible translators and Christian communicators as linguistic and translation know-how already is. Shaw's poignant personal illustrations of cultural misunderstandings experienced among the Samo of Papua New Guinea as a missionary translator lend conviction and relevance to his presentation. Shaw follows the basic three culture-interaction model (the cultures of the biblical text, the translator, and the receptor) first introduced by Eugene Nida. It is helpful for sensitive communicators and translators, but be warned—it is not easy reading and it left me with some concerns:

1) Translating one culture into another has severe limits for the Bible translator; e.g., to call Jesus' robe at the crucifixion a loincloth, even if it is the best cultural equivalent, is unacceptable because it introduces an historical and factual anomaly.

2) The Bible translation movement as a whole has recognized that using mother-tongue speakers as translators is the best approach, because it eliminates one culture in the equation and because it brings that culture into direct contact with the inspiration of Scripture. This approach receives only secondary attention.

3) The source references are too few. Other scholars have grappled with these problems and made worthwhile contributions, e.g., E. H. Bendix's *Componential Analysis of General Vocabulary* (1966). Other references are poorly chosen, e.g., Loewen (1967) does not deal with insider/outsider roles; Loewen (1976: Vol. 4) in *Missiology* does.

Jacob A. Loewen, a retired missionary and translation consultant, lives in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

Gustav Warneck's Missiologishes Erbe: Eine biographisch-historishche Untersuchung. By Hans Kasdorf. Giessen/Basel: Brunnen Verlag, 1990, 488 pp., price unknown.

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

In this volume we have the dissertation Hans Kasdorf submitted to the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, in 1976. It is a thorough study of the contribution of the "father of missiology," Gustav Warneck. The first chapter sketches Warneck's life. The second chapter concentrates on Warneck's literary labors culminating in his five-volume study in mission theory—considered generally as the starting point of missiology as a discipline. In the third chapter Kasdorf sketches Warneck's missiological approach to the history of missions and several other themes such as mission and culture and mission studies.

Chapter four is a treatment of Warneck in relation to Pietism; chapter five examines the earlier missiological tradition of Graul, Hoffmann, and others of the generation just preceding Warneck. Then Kasdorf discusses Warneck's colleagues and immediate successors. Chapter seven discusses the important question of Anglo-Saxon mission theory which contrasted in certain important ways with the German school. Chapters eight and nine cover Warneck's view of Old Testament foundations and basis for mission in the Gospels.

Chapter ten discusses ethnological foundations and chapter eleven analyzes the way ecclesiology functions in Warneck's missiology. The theme of chapter twelve is the nature and structure of mission. Chapter thirteen has to do with discipling the nations. The final chapter concerns Warneck's successor and the School of World Mission. Kasdorf is a thorough researcher. Notes and bibliography run to 163 pages. As Professor Hans-Werner Gensichen said of Kasdorf's work, no one will soon undertake a similar study of Warneck.

Wilbert R. Shenk is director of the Mission Training Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana, and is a participant in The Gospel and Our Culture project originating in Birmingham, England.

Understanding and Nurturing the Missionary Family. Edited by Pam Echerd and Alice Arathoon. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989, 424 pp., $10.95 (pb)

Planning for MK Nurture. Edited by Pam Echerd and Alice Arathoon. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989, 374 pp., $10.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Erma Sider

The editors cooperating in this two-volume series are missionary kids (MKs). Both have had cross-cultural experience: Alice is currently working with newly arrived expatriate school teachers in Guatemala, and Pam coordinates Wycliffe's pre-field training for children.

The books are a compendium of the second International Conference on Missionary Kids (ICMK) convening in Quito, Ecuador, in January 1987. ICMK came into being to bring together people involved with missionaries and their children—dorm parents, school administrators, mission board executives, and teachers—in an attempt to focus on needs of the missionary family. Presenters came from a broad spectrum of mission societies, schools, professions, countries, and denominations.

Volume 1 deals with topics relating to the missionary family, from "Raising Children Overseas" and "When Missionaries and MKs Hurt" to "The Cult Appeal: Is the MK Susceptible or Immune?" Volume 2 addresses the education of MKs in "The State of MK Education" and "Marketing Principles for the MK School."

Though MKs have long been pictured as "different" or as people with problems, the authors point out that most MKs become reasonably well-adjusted adults, able to cope with life in their "home" country (where is "home" for the MK?). Those who don't cope are the ones most visible and discussed.

When the MK has a healthy self-concept developed from family, school, and societal relationships and built on a personal relationship with God, he or she can cope with almost anything, including boarding school, separation from parents, or terrorist attacks. Conversely, when that wholesome self-image is lacking, a support system is needed to provide direction, encouragement, and counsel for the MK.

The best presentations provide information to parents, dorm parents, teachers, and other helpers in understanding how cross-cultural living affects the child, how to enrich the life of a child who seems to be coping well, and how to find and deal with the underlying causes of problems faced by some MKs. Since from this group may come our most capable missionaries, it is important that MKs' full potential be released.

Sections most insightful were "When Special Care Is Needed" (Vol. 1), and those dealing with issues of depression, suicide, burnout, and "MK Reentry" (Vol. 2), a topic currently receiving increased attention from colleges and receiving churches. Because these volumes are a compendium of spoken materials transcribed from tape, the reading is not always smooth, and there is some overlap of topics.

As a parent of two MKs, I am grateful for people concerned enough to make this research and experience available. Both books are "must" reading for educators and support staff in MK and international schools. I especially recommend volume one for parents, mission administrators, the sending church, those involved in orientation and reentry programs, and MKs themselves.

Erma Sider is the cross-cultural reading program coordinator for Brethren in Christ World Missions, Stevensville, Ontario.

Before Burnout: Balanced Living for Busy People. By Frank Minirth, Don Hawkins, Paul Meier, and Chris Thurman. Chicago: Moody Press, 1990, 189 pp., $7.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Ferne Hiebert

The four authors, connected with the Minirth-Meier Clinic in Richardson, Texas, also serve in radio and television programs and as seminary or university professors of pastoral ministry or psychology.

Before Burnout takes a close look at obses-

sive-compulsive (O-C) and Type A personalities and how in certain areas they can tend toward extremes. Being O-C isn't all bad. These people are some of our most diligent and productive workers. A high percentage of professional and ministry people are O-C, including the authors themselves, which uniquely qualifies them to write this book. When this personality strength is expressed to the extreme it becomes a weakness—and that's the road to burnout.

The books's purpose is to make readers aware of danger signals and to suggest how to become more balanced. The burnout-prone O-C personality is described, among other things, as detail oriented, money focused, dirt obsessed and project directed. Some of the road hazards that threaten balanced living are perfectionism, workaholism, competitiveness, impatience, and hostility. Dealing with these characteristics wholesomely includes solving relational problems, relating positively to others, handling the circumstances of life, accepting the fact of death, and keeping a perspective on God's purpose.

The book is full of scriptural and practical helps. With its strong emphasis on spiritual wholeness as the antidote to burnout, it is unique in its approach and offers a helpful guide to more balanced living.

Ferne Hiebert is secretary for personnel, Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, in Hillsboro, Kansas.

Kids for the World: A Guidebook for Children's Mission Resources. By Gerry Dueck. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1990, 57 pp., $11.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Linea Reimer Geiser

Compiler Gerry Dueck received her training at Grace College of the Bible and Tabor College. In 1982 she and her husband joined the U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California. Her assignment is to research, write, and teach others how to incorporate mission education into existing children's programs.

The book's strength is its organization. Part I groups materials by curricula, books, activities, visual aids, audiovisuals, and music by the countries and peoples on whom they focus and by publishers/suppliers from whom they can be purchased. They are age coded. Part II gives sample lessons and sample pages from resource materials. These sample lessons emphasize sending missionaries to the "hidden peoples" of the world, those ethnic/religious groups who do not have missionaries working among them.

The book has several drawbacks. No publication dates are given for the resources listed. Missiological emphases have changed over the years. Events in the world change at a rapid pace. It is important to know, for example, whether materials on China or the Soviet Union are recent or otherwise outdated. The book does not list materials available from Mennonite writers or mission boards.

The purpose of the book is to supply church education leaders with resources to grow world Christians. I am all in favor. But I wish for more emphasis on *working together with Christians everywhere* to share God's good news, among *all* peoples—whom this book refers to as "reached" or "unreached."

Linea Reimer Geiser is a communication associate at Mennonite Board of Missions, and a curriculum writer of children and adult materials for Mennonite Publishing House.

In Pursuit of the Kingdom: Writings, 1968-1988. By Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 254 pp., $12.95 (pb)

Reviewed by J. R. Burkholder

Pedro Casaldaliga was born in Barcelona in 1928, ordained a priest in the Claretian order in 1952, and went as a missionary to the northern Mato Grosso (bush country) of Brazil in 1968. Chosen to be bishop of Sao Felix in 1971, he at first refused but then accepted, and immediately became a prominent advocate for the poor and dispossessed. As his co-workers were jailed, tortured, and killed in the worst of the oppression of the late 1970s, Bishop Pedro led numerous protests even as he kept up his pastoral work and the writing that is sampled in this book.

If one wants to grasp the concrete human meaning of such current slogans as "liberation theology" and "preferential option for the poor," these passionate writings will serve admirably. There is no space for quotations in a brief review, yet this is a book that begs to be quoted. Excerpts from books, sermons, and poems display the humor, lyricism, anger against injustice, and hope in the midst of suffering that characterize this exceptional man. The topical arrangement is frustrating for the reader who wishes to follow the career of the bishop, but the cumulative impact is compelling nonetheless.

As Bishop Thomas Gumbleton says in the foreword, Casaldaliga is not writing as a theorist, but more like the prophet Amos. Spiritual and political concerns are inseparably interwoven in Casaldaliga's thought. Although often at odds with traditional attitudes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, these writings reveal a soul that is deeply catholic and Latin. For example, the section "Being Church, Here, Now" reflects Casaldaliga's profound sense of time and place, linking the mystical piety of his Catalonian roots with the problems and aspirations of the indigenous peoples of the Brazilian Mato Grosso.

Encountering Bishop Pedro is a disturbing yet liberating experience.

J. R. Burkholder, recently on the faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, is currently a teaching elder in the Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

Sepia Prints: Memoirs of a Missionary in India. By Viola Bergthold Wiebe and Marilyn Wiebe Dodge. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1990, 173 pp., $29.95 U.S., $35.95 Canada

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

Through this scrapbook the reader is given a highly personal view of Viola Bergthold Wiebe's life and long service as a missionary in India. Using family photographs and a rich assortment of other memorabilia, Wiebe offers many visual images of her life as a missionary child in India, her high school and college years, and then some forty years in India with husband, John, and their seven children. The straightforward text tells what daily life was like in pre-Independence India. The portrait that emerges shows a family totally committed to the service of God and the church in India. They brought to the task common sense, wisdom, and good spirit. The book abounds in human interest. There is a section on the remedies that were in vogue "for various ailments" early in this century. For instance, Woodward's Gripe Water (for colic) was made from a handful of dill leaves boiled in a cup of water, made bearable by adding sugar, and served to the colicky child in doses of one-half to one teaspoon. Every malady had its special remedy. This reminds us of another time when the medical arts were more limited in scope and professional services less accessible than we moderns have come to expect. Mrs. Wiebe has given her family, friends, and the wider church community a beautiful gift. It reminds us of another generation's vision and commitment that set a standard of devotion we would do well to emulate.

Wilbert R. Shenk is director of the Mission Training Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective. By Stephan A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Books, 2nd ed., 1988, 304 pp., $13.95 (pb)

Reviewed by J. Stanley Friesen

This volume on cultural anthropology presents what its subtitle indicates, addressed primarily to Bible school and college students of conser-

vative evangelical backgrounds in North America. The authors present a sympathetic approach to the problems of cultural diversity in the increasingly pluralistic societies in which we live.

As a textbook it takes up the standard topics: communication, economy, role and status, marriage and family, religion for introductory courses in anthropology, and refers the student to the classic works in the field. But as Eugene Nida points out in the Foreword, "it is disappointing in not finding full-scale discussions of some of the crucial issues in contemporary anthropology" (p. xi). One would also expect that a new edition would have updated the "Suggested Readings" at the end of each chapter. However, most of the works listed are standard works in the field from twenty years ago.

This new edition has additional treatments in chapter 1, "Anthropology and Mission"; chapter 6, "Economy and Technology"; and chapter 14, "Biblical Authority and Cultural Relativity." This new material is drawn from Dr. Grunlan's book, *Christian Perspectives on Sociology* (Zondervan, 1982) (p. xiv). The second edition contains also a new concluding chapter on "Anthropology and Theology."

Perhaps the most controversial feature of the book is the manner in which the authors deal with the tension between cultural relativity and biblical authority. At the outset, the authors state that "to be effective in ministering cross-culturally, we must be cultural relativists as well as advocates of biblical authority" (p. 27). In order to hold on to the poles of biblical authority and relativism, the authors attempt to distinguish between cultural relativism and ethical and moral relativism. In practical terms, biblical authority does not depend upon a society being either patrilineal or matrilineal. But the authors' distinction between cultural relativism, on the one hand, and moral and ethical relativism, on the other, breaks down on the issue of polygyny, which is both an ethical and a cultural issue for many Christians. The problem of polygyny has a long and complex history in missiology, probably because cultural and ethical relativism cannot be easily separated from each other.

The chapter on religion introduces the question of the uniqueness of Christianity among the religions of the world. But nothing of the current debate and ferment in missiology on this issue is developed.

The reissuing of this work after nine years speaks to its strength as a basic tool to introduce students to the fundamental topics of anthropology. In the mind of this reviewer, however, the revised edition does not adequately deal with current issues in anthropology or missiology.

J. Stanley Friesen is a former missionary to Nigeria and Ghana with Mennonite Board of Missions; he currently pastors the College Community Church in Fresno, California.

Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice. By Donald E. MacInnis. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989, 458 pp., $34.95/ $18.95 (pb)

Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front. By Philip L. Wickeri. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988, 356 pp., $27.95.

Reviewed by Robert Lee

The authors of these two complementary books are both experienced scholars of religion and the church in China. MacInnis, who has studied about China for more than four decades, formerly directed the China Program of the National Council of Churches of Christ and currently is the Coordinator for China Research at the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Wickeri, for fifteen years a missionary/fraternal worker of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, began his research on the Chinese church while teaching at Nanjing University (1981-83) and in 1985 was appointed as the Overseas Coordinator of the Amity Foundation, the only educational and social service institution initiated by Chinese Christians.

Religion in China Today is a broadly focused collection of 137 documents—translations of Chinese government policy statements; journal articles by Chinese scholars and specialists on religion; Chinese press reports; speeches by Chinese political and religious leaders; and the author's firsthand interviews with Chinese religious leaders—describing the present official policy on religion and the actual religious situation since 1979. As a sequel to his earlier book (*Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China*; New York: Macmillan, 1972), which provided a documentary history from the earliest Communist experience in the 1920s through the 1950s and the early 1960s, in this book MacInnis documents the great changes that have taken place after the "cultural revolution." The coverage includes the activities of the five officially recognized religions—Buddhism (including Tibetan), Daoism, Islam, Christianity (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Russian Orthodox), and Judaism—and also Confucianism, popular religion or "superstitution" (which is officially differentiated from religion), and other related topics.

Seeking the Common Ground is a narrowly focused study of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement, of how since 1949 the leaders and the members of this indigenous Chinese Protestant movement "have sought to establish themselves as an independent, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating church; to identify themselves with the Chinese people; and to seek common ground with the Chinese Communist Party in its efforts for modernization and socialist reconstruction" (p. xx). Based upon the author's doctoral research at Princeton Theological Seminary, this book is the most comprehensive study of the Protestant church in China over the last forty years.

The two books contrast in approach and method. MacInnis provides a comprehensive collection of informative documents for understanding the thinking and the policies of the post-"cultural revolution" government on all the religious groups in China with little commentary or interpretive framework. Apart from the redundancy of relying primarily upon a series of translated documents—supplemented by transcripts of interviews with religious leaders—to convey the story, readers who are not familiar with recent Chinese history and thought may also be dissatisfied by the minimum of interpretive framework for evaluating the significance of the documents.

Wickeri, on the other hand, focusing only upon the Three-Self Church Movement, provides a "thick" interpretive framework for understanding the development of the indigenous church by setting the events in the context of Chinese history and Chinese Marxist-Leninist thought since 1949, especially in terms of such key political concepts of "the united front" and "seeking common ground." His analysis and interpretation will go a long way in helping the uninitiated as well as the initiated to understand sympathetically how the Chinese Christians of the Three-Self Movement have integrated their national and religious identities without losing their faith. However, at times his theological assessment becomes overly interpretative and apologetic.

Although the two books overlap in the coverage of the Chinese government policy on religion, the two volumes are sufficiently different to complement and to reinforce each other. While not the last word, these two works are certainly the best in their respective areas.

Robert Lee and his wife Nancy serve with Mennonite Board of Missions in Tokyo, Japan, with occasional assignments in China.

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Editorial

"In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5:19). The church of Jesus Christ *will* continue this mission of teaching, preaching, and healing throughout the world (Acts 1:8). "Mission vision and expansive evangelistic growth are not optional. . . ," writes Henry Schmidt in the lead article. As the twentieth century closes, the church in North America is faced with a critical question: Are we members of the aforementioned church, or are we creating another?

Recent developments might indicate the latter direction. General Conference Mennonite Church leaders, when confronted in March with the sobering projection of a 16 percent decline in membership over the next two decades "unless the conference attracts more people from non-Mennonite families," proceeded to cut staff time for evangelism and church development by 25 percent. The overall decline in Mennonite churchwide giving seems to be related to an increase in staffing for nonmission ministry at the congregational level. Although it has not been documented, a casual reading of Mennonite periodicals gives the impression of an increase in brick and mortar expenditures by congregations and institutions. Fear that "it might grow too large" was cited as a concern when a conference considered whether or not to fund an inner-city educational mission. Eight inner-city pastors in three midwestern cities resigned in 1990, resulting in the closure of several congregations and an uncertain future for others. Pilot congregations involved in the Congregational Discipling Model, an integrated vision for Christian education, had positive experiences with the worship and community arenas; all expressed difficulty with the mission arena.

Is there a correlation between the decline of support for overseas mission and limited congregational involvement in mission in our communities? What will it take for us to see the harvest in our own backyard? The church in Africa, Asia, and Latin America has seen the North American mission field and has been sending workers for at least a decade. The internationalization of mission is a welcome development. According to the Mennonite International Study Project, our international sisters and brothers advise us to make sure that North American missionaries have had experience with evangelization (or whatever work they will be doing) in their *own* culture before they come to do it in a different culture.

Recovering a vision for global mission is inextricably linked with recovering a vision for local congregational mission. Both will be hindered as long as mission structures continue to view them as competitive. Mission methods and strategy are quite similar whether one crosses an ocean or a railroad track. Global internationalization and urbanization dynamics call for bringing these two together. One could argue that the plight of the poor and oppressed in North America should be primary agenda for the church in light of the obscene affluence which is so pervasive in our society. Ezekiel's record of the sin of Sodom sounds hauntingly contemporary: "She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy" (16:49).

As Mennonite denominations discuss greater cooperation and propose new structures, it is imperative that a primary result be the strengthening of a new vision for authentic global mission. Recovering the vision for local congregational mission is of utmost importance.

Henry Schmidt helps us to understand the growing phenomenon of plateaued congregations and proposes five strategies for moving a congregation beyond the plateau. Brice Balmer deals effectively with an important internal congregational dynamic: the creative tension between mission and maintenance. He demonstrates that older established congregations can initiate cutting edge ministries which have potential for bringing diverse people groups into congregational life. David Paulovich explains a new tool which is beginning to show good potential for discerning persons who have unique characteristics which will be effective in church planting and evangelism assignments. This tool will be helpful as local congregations increase their prayer efforts for workers to enter the harvest. A recent church planting case study illustrates a new model for evangelistic outreach which could work in many Mennonite communities. Of the congregational mission books reviewed in this issue, *Effective Church Leadership* (Callahan), and *U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches* (Sample) are highly recommended.

—Gary E. Martin, Guest Editor

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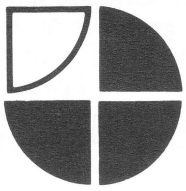

The Home:
A Place to Begin Opening Windows on the World

ELAINE SOMMERS RICH

The late J. D. Graber said, "I believe there is not even a near substitute in the best modern methods of Christian nurture that can match the effectiveness of a truly Christian home in developing Christian faith and character" (Wenger 1965:53). How true! There exists no better place than the home to begin opening windows on the world. The home, congregation, community, and school are partners in the global awareness venture, but of these, the greatest is the home. Aristotle recognized long ago that the household is more fundamental than the city. And we cherish the familiar words from Deuteronomy 6:6-7, NIV: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

My husband and I have been married thirty-eight years and have four grown children. Many persons from many cultures have enriched our family, particularly when, for ten years, we lived on the campus of the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. In this article, however, I speak for myself, recalling personal experiences and pondering their relevance for families in general.

When I was a child in the 1930s, I was aware that Aunt Katie and Uncle George Troyer (my father's sister married to my mother's youngest uncle) were missionaries in India, for on our table was a toothpick holder from India that they had given my parents on their first furlough. India and Indiana. One—far away, hot, different, filled with dark-skinned people who did not know Jesus. The other—familiar, comfortable, daily, home.

The family dining table continues to provide opportunities for mission education through at least four channels: prayers, food, conversation, and guests. Consider each of these.

Prayers

In *Prayers for Everyday* (1990), I included a table grace which Miriam Housman of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has used with kindergarten children for many years:

Dear God,
I gratefully bow my head
To thank you for my daily bread,
And may there be a goodly share
On every table everywhere. Amen.

That last line can be expanded by adding whatever country one wishes to emphasize—"especially in Sudan" or "especially in Iraq."

Every home should have a globe, an atlas, and some kind of reference work in which children can look up countries. Expensive? The supermarket at which I shop is currently offering a children's encyclopedia, one volume at a time, at bargain prices. What are a family's priorities? What is more important—a video game or a globe? And a trip to a free public library costs only transportation. International students find Americans to be ignorant of the rest of the world—persons who have never heard of Malawi, let alone its capital Lilongwe. May it not be so among us!

In addition to the prayer of thanksgiving for food, the family table is also often the site of family worship. Mission boards provide helpful prayer guides. For example, three Mennonite groups cooperate to publish *Rejoice!*, a devotional quarterly with daily intercessory prayer suggestions. Mennonite Board of Missions at Elkhart, Indiana, provides a monthly prayer calendar with daily suggestions, as does the Virginia Conference and Board of Missions. Hearing these requests read aloud, helping to read them, participating in the prayers, is indeed education about and for mission: Ambikapur, India; Fukuoka, Japan; Phoenix, Arizona; Nazareth, Israel; San Lorenzo, Sicily. Family members become aware of people and places where their church is at work.

Food

Food itself can be a means through which children learn about other parts of the world. Where does pineapple come from? Do we know anyone from there? Does our church have work there? The by-now-famous *More-with-Less Cookbook* contains recipes from all over the world: *kusherie* (Egyptian rice and lentils), *nasi goreng* (Indonesian fried rice), *torta pascualina* (Argentine spinach pie). In our case, teaching our children to be adventurous about trying new foods served them well in later life—although one remains skeptical of *tofu*.

At one time I tried to serve guests from other countries

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food from their native lands. I gave that up when an Ethiopian student said politely about the main dish, "I would not deceive you to say it is the best *mahfouf* I have ever eaten." Somehow I realized that it probably tasted nothing like the real thing! I now usually cook for international guests what I cook best—American food. I cannot make neat rolled *sushi* as the Japanese women do. Mine look messy. Self acceptance goes along with acceptance of others.

Conversation

Conversation at the family table is another important tool for expanding horizons. Family members can share from their reading and experience interesting items about the church at work. Parents set the tone. A family living in a cultural setting not its own may have questions about everyday events to discuss at the dinner table. What is an appropriate gift to take to the neighbor's new baby? How do we find out? Questions about words and language will come up. Often children pick up a language and culture more rapidly than their parents.

Granted, the family—especially in the United States and Canada—is under siege. Outside pressures, particularly for junior high and high school students, are incredible—soccer, basketball, band, play practice, youth group. I once had breakfast with a Canadian family and was astounded that their high school son had already been to hockey practice at some amazing hour, such as 3:00 a.m. I asked, "Why do you practice at night?" He replied, "It's the only time our school can get the practice stadium."

Despite these pressures, families *can* resist the tide and protect the evening meal as an undisturbed time together. To me it seems legitimate to tell a telephone caller that you cannot take a call now because the family is having dinner, but you will return the call later. Perhaps this is an occasion to employ that technological servant, the answering machine. As children grow older, the entire family needs to discuss the matter of schedule. Do we control our schedule? Or do the television set and the telephone control us? How rewarding to have an adult son or daughter say, "Some of my best memories of home are those wonderful discussions we had at the dinner table."

Guests

A fourth way in which a home can interact with the world outside is to invite people inside to sit down at the table with the family. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:2, NIV). We once invited as guests a refugee couple who had just arrived in the U.S. from Cambodia and who knew little English. How did we communicate? We gestured. We drew pictures. Could I have a good time in another country visiting the home of a family who spoke no English? Of course. All people have eyes to see and hands to do. We can all laugh. We can all "feel where words come from," as Indian chief Papunehang said to Quaker John Woolman through a translator long ago.

In entertaining guests from other cultures, one must be adaptable and prepared for surprises. A sense of humor helps. On one occasion, the Japanese family we had invited for a 6:00 p.m. dinner called—at 6:00 p.m.!—to say their little boy did not want to leave his television programs. They would come, they said, when he had finished. They arrived an hour and a half later. Another

Elaine Sommers Rich is a freelance writer from Bluffton, Ohio. Among her works are Mennonite Women *and* Prayers for Everyday. *She and her family lived in Japan for ten years on the campus of International Christian University in Tokyo. She later served as adviser to international students at Bluffton College.*

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time, a Kuwaiti Muslim said our house was not clean enough to pray in. He spread out a white cloth on which to kneel. Then again, there was the time I asked a newly-arrived Kenyan student how many brothers and sisters he had. He replied, "Seventeen." I must have looked startled for he explained, "My father has five wives."

In addition to the cross-cultural helps mentioned earlier—globe, maps, reference books—readers should be aware of an outstanding set of aids for understanding other cultures. The David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, has prepared *Culturgrams* for 102 different countries. A *Culturgram* is a four-page flyer that gives essential information about a country. First, there is a map showing major cities. Next comes a section on "Customs and Courtesies" that includes greetings, visiting, eating, gestures, and personal appearance. Then there is information about the people—their general attitudes, taboos, language, and lifestyle. Finally, information about the nation itself is provided: the land and climate, history, government, and economy. The entire set costs $44.00; single sets are available for $1.00 each.

I do not accept the accusation that I am a cultural imperialist when I share with others my faith in Jesus Christ. I want all people to have education, adequate medical care, and enough to eat. And I want them to have the greatest gift of all. J. D. Graber was right when he observed that there is no better way to convey the Christian message than through the Christian home.

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Educating for Mission Through Worship

DOROTHY HARNISH

Grandma died when I was seven. I loved to sit with Grandma in church. Grandma sat up front. Up front snuggled among the grandmas, I learned what mission was. I *heard* missions every Sunday through Pastor Emory's prayers for the missionaries by name, for the youth, and for us children. I *saw* missions as missionary speakers came wearing special clothing, bringing different musical instruments and big machetes and showing slides that included lots of children. I *touched* missions as my pennies, nickels, and dimes filled the tin missionary bank on dedication Sunday. I *did* missions on that special summer Sunday each year when we brought our MCC Christmas bundles to church. Joyfully I selected a dress, a sweater, socks, and a toy for a girl my age somewhere far away. Carefully I arranged them in a pretty towel secured with big safety pins. Then, with Pastor Emory's prayers upon all the bundles, we sent them forth "in the name of Christ." How fortunate I have been to have grown up in a child-inclusive church where I learned missions in worship.

Worship provides the context to apprehend the call to mission. In worship we encounter and enter into the world that God loves. In worship we sense God's yearning and unite with God's loving, creative, liberating purpose in the world. Worship is the context in which we are reminded of God's acts in salvation history. Through the recital of the Christian story and the affirmation of our beliefs we are reminded that God sent Jesus and Jesus sends us with the words, "Even so I send you. As you go, make disciples."

Through our encounter with God in worship, our values are shaped: we learn to walk humbly, love tenderly, and act justly. We are challenged to become a part of God's work in the world.

The congregation might best be described as "a worshiping community of disciples in mission." We are formed into a community of persons who serve as a living sign of God's reign in the world. In worship the congregation enters into God's presence and opens itself to the source of its being. As believers come together around the Scripture for prayer, proclamation, music, and silence, members are shaped into a faithful covenanted people.

In the Anabaptist tradition, God's people gather around the Scriptures. Our foundational definition of who we are is focused as we interpret Scripture through Christ and the community. We can never separate proclamation of the Word from the doing of the Word. In worship we submit in mutuality to one another, recognizing the voice of God that comes to us in many ways, through many people. Mission today is not simply information about faraway places. It is learning to share, to care, and to spread the love of God through Christian service. Learning about other cultures enriches us and helps us to gain deeper theological insights.

Use of the lectionary is an effective way to experience mission through worship. In the course of a year, the life of Christ is experienced anew as the congregation focuses on themes of Jesus' advent, birth, ministry, death, and resurrection. The lectionary provides a disciplined approach to salvation history. It confronts us with our commitment to walk in Christ's way in the world. The test of true worship is having the Spirit of the Lord come upon **us**, as it did upon Christ, anointing **us** to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the captives, and to proclaim the year of the Lord.

Last year, on the first Sunday of Advent, I visited a neighboring church and witnessed a most striking visual expression of the Advent theme with a missional focus. A large wheel—which held particular significance for the congregation—was decorated with greens. Instead of the traditional colors associated with Advent candles, other colors were used—brown, yellow, white, and red, representing people loved by God around the world. This symbol launched an emphasis on missions for the month of December.

In our congregation this year we chose John 3:16 as our Advent text. We used a globe, placed inside an arrange-

Dorothy Harnish is currently on staff of the Board of Congregational Resources for Lancaster Mennonite Conference. With specific responsibility for Christian education, she is available to assist persons in shaping congregational ministries.

ment of greens. Each week the theme selected for worship and proclamation focused on a particular part of the world that God loves.

Congregations which choose not to follow the lectionary can highlight, nonetheless, major holy days and seasons. Pentecost, for example, commemorates an important moment in the evangelistic outreach of the early church. Creative opportunities for worship abound. Instead of emphasizing shamrocks and corned beef, why not focus on church planting in the month of March to honor St. Patrick, the fifth-century missioner to Ireland? The worship service on Pentecost Sunday could include stories and testimonies about the church's current witness in Ireland.

During Lenten season, many congregations choose to focus on the role of the disciples. Instead of presenting Thomas as "the doubting disciple," why not focus on Thomas "the great missionary" of the first century, for "doubting Thomas" was, according to tradition, a most influential church planter.

Every gathering for worship can be a time for mission information. Some congregations include a mission moment each Sunday. Much information can be given in a well-planned one-minute presentation. Efforts should be made to include both global and local expressions of what it means to be God's people in the world. A consistent weekly emphasis of this nature will teach all adults, youth, and children that mission activity is an integral, not separate, part of our life as a congregation and individuals.

The primary medium of formation for mission through worship is storytelling, a powerful mode of proclamation. Stories enable us to hear God's call "to go," and in our going, "to make disciples." As the faith stories of the elderly, of new believers, and of our children in their everyday encounters on the playground or in the school bus are shared in worship, we are challenged to faithfulness.

How else might we plan for worship experiences which engage us in mission? Some congregations have an annual mission festival with a day-long or weekend focus on a particular part of God's world. Such festivals provide a structure for learning mission through the senses—seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting.

Church potluck dinners might likewise be transformed into church blessings with a focus on food around the world. Two wonderful resources, *More-With-Less Cookbook* and *Extending the Table* (available from Herald Press), contain food ideas for both body and mind, and provide a pleasurable and valuable learning experience for the gathered community. Children could be asked to model costumes from the countries featured at the meal.

Music provides another avenue for mission education. A "hymn of the month" from the Mennonite World Conference Hymnbook (1990) can be received as a gift, celebrating the mutuality we experience as members of the world Christian community.

Mission education is not a line in the congregational budget. It is not a program. Nor is it the vocation of a special few. Rather, it is the call of every Christian to unite with God's loving, creative, liberating purpose in the world.

"Mission" is that which describes the daily encounter and involvements of the people in the congregation. As these daily activities are brought into the context of worship, we are renewed and empowered to affirm that Christ died, Christ arose, and Christ will come again. Making this affirmation of our faith draws us into God's yearning and into the world which God loves—the world God has chosen to love through us, divine expressions of this same love.

Missions and Outreach

Educating by Doing in the Congregation

BRICE BALMER

The understanding of missions, evangelism, and outreach has changed in the local congregation in the past two decades. The changes have increased the volunteer and financial support for missions, but have shifted the focus away from overseas missions through denominational boards to local missions—through conference structures, community organizations often begun by church coalitions, the congregation's own outreach programs, and Mennonite Central Committee.

The congregation's personal and financial commitment to "reaching others in the name of Christ" has, in many instances, increased and become a higher proportion of the church's budget. It has also affected other areas of congregational life, such as use of the building during the week, pastoral staff time, Sunday schools which bring in children from the area, support of ethnic Mennonite fellowships, and student aid programs. The result for many congregations is that "the mission field has come home" in an intense way which no longer requires slides, missionary visits, and adventure stories from some other country. Mission has become "us"; it is "the city and people where we live and worship."

This impressionistic report focuses on what I have heard and seen as a pastor and community minister in two urban locations over the past twenty years. These trends and other questions of "missions" in the local congregation need more time and space than can be provided in this essay.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) facilitates some of these changes in mission involvement by providing a training ground for members/workers. Many church members have been directly involved in MCC work over the years through voluntary service, SELFHELP Crafts and thrift shop activities, relief sales, refugee resettlement, committees and boards at provincial or regional levels, local inter-Mennonite trainee committees, and development of local projects in peace, justice, or community service. There is investment and ownership for MCC within many congregations. When disaster strikes, churches become directly involved as both money and

Brice Balmer is on the pastoral team at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario. He is chaplain at the House of Friendship, a church community service for low-income people. Brice has been active in conference mission committees and urban outreach program.

supplies are gathered to help people. MCC is a "hands on" organization, and there is immediate response.

Furthermore, MCC has brought new skills into the congregation through voluntary service workers who return to North America, often having acquired a new language and a deep commitment to continue working in efforts for peace, justice, and evangelism. Equipped with new skills, they have gained a heightened sense of world needs and are ready to reach out to others within the local community and to see the church as a "mission people." Parents, friends, other family members, and the entire congregation have been part of their "going" into voluntary service. Though some returning volunteers are dissatisfied with those of us in the home congregation because we are less enthusiastic than they wish, we are pushed forward by their experiences and our involvement with them, both during their term of service and upon their return home.

In addition to MCC's network of people and activities, other local organizations have begun to meet area needs and to evangelize. Some of these are national or international groups like Habitat for Humanity, which builds homes for people in both urban and rural areas and depends on volunteers and local committees. Mennonite people are involved in Big Brothers, Big Sisters, M-2 or W-2, Project Ploughshares, YMCA or YWCA, United Way organizations, or service clubs. Social services, community or neighborhood development, housing, counseling and mental health, emergency assistance, food banks, peace and justice groups, and tutoring children or illiterate adults are examples of our involvements with others. These groups are loyally supported by their members and regularly call for money and volunteers.

Mission comes home to the local church as Mennonite people move to the city or as the city surrounds previously rural communities. The younger generations (baby boomers) have gone to universities and colleges, while many in the older generations only had the chance to complete eighth grade. Baby boomers ask more questions and want more "hands on" or concrete experiences. Many hold jobs as teachers, social workers, medical professionals, attorneys, business people, or government bureaucrats, so the concerns of the city come back to the church. We want to know: "Can the church reach out and help?" Evangelism, outreach, and service projects begin from the church base.

Urban Mennonites have often been at the heart of church coalitions in the city through financial and volunteer support, as well as through the use of church buildings. Many urban congregations become overextended because of the variety of needs and their commitment to be a discipleship people. Donations to the churchwide organizations are gradually reduced as local mission becomes the higher priority and denominational concerns seem "far away."

How does the pastor work with these forces in an urban congregation? First, the pastor, like the members, is deeply involved in community ministries and more able to grasp concrete local projects than large programs far away. Second, the pastor must work with the congregation's mission committee to encourage ongoing forums for discussing mission within the church. Members on such a committee will have different priorities and experiences, so that with time, the congregation's understanding of and involvement in mission will be broadened. Third, a pastor soon becomes aware that there is more to do and be in missions at the congregational, conference, and denominational levels than one can possibly tackle. It becomes important to set priorities as individual members and as a congregation.

Given these assumptions, we as pastors and church leaders at First Mennonite Church have worked hard to encourage increased awareness and ownership of missions in the church:

1. We have been creative with what comes our way, either by circumstance or by tradition. The church has, for example, taken seriously the refugee people we have sponsored. We have assisted such persons in resettlement and in forming a Christian community where they—and we—can nurture faith and commitment to Christ. We have learned much about their cultures and tried to understand what it must mean to leave everything.

Support for organizations in the city has taken a more "hands on" approach by involving more of our members on our mission commission, in volunteer positions, and in increased financial support. We have had a number of people become church members and find in us a warm community of faith and fellowship.

2. The church has publicized voluntary service openings and has encouraged people to become involved in short- or long-term assignments. We commission these people as they leave, welcome them back when they return, send tapes and mail, and find letter writers within the congregation so that workers feel supported while away. Upon returning, volunteers are asked to make reports and submit articles to our church newsletter.

Members who cannot leave the area are encouraged to either participate in local voluntary service assignments, choose "retirement careers" that involve church and community service, or find other volunteer opportunities. Mission is automatically supported if members are directly involved and if they talk about the unique experiences they've had and the people they've met.

3. We have attempted to establish links between denominational programs and the local concerns of our members. Sometimes these links derive from common concerns or common languages spoken. Often the links are natural ones, coming from persons known by the congregation. Stories from mission board publications that can be used as sermon illustrations or children's stories are helpful. Mission communicators and congregational liaison persons are placed on the church's mission committee to keep members aware of new opportunities and programs.

4. We realize that we are but one small part of the world, about which there is so much to know and understand. Generating interest and concern for the "global picture" is difficult because local concerns are so much easier to see and to respond to. But we try in a variety of ways to create a sense of world Christian community—through worldwide communion and Mennonite World Conference Sundays, pastoral prayers, and through denominational materials which highlight articles about and relationships with Mennonites around the world.

Outreach, service, and evangelism are becoming more local and more "hands on"—something we can see and talk about in the congregation. In a day when the news of the world is immediately in front of us through television and radio, we are realizing that mission has, in many ways, "come home." We are increasingly seeing the needs of the world in our own backyards and neighborhoods. Consequently, local mission programs, rather than those "overseas," have become the focus of our money, time, and energies.

LOOK HOW SKINNY SHE IS! DON'T YOU JUST HATE HER?
I WONDER WHERE SHE GOT THAT SWEET TOP!
WELL, LIKE, I'LL BET HE DOESN'T HAVE TO STUDY FOR A STUPID ALGEBRA EXAM THIS FRIDAY!
I WISH I COULD GET MY HAIR TO DO THAT
WHAT A TAN!
OH, MAN! THEY LIVE ON A BEACH!

Third-world seen through first-world eyes.

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Keeping the World on the Congregation's Agenda

DAVE SCHROCK-SHENK

"Keeping the world on the congregation's agenda" is a big topic. Perhaps you are a bit hesitant to read this article; I was hesitant to write it! To overcome my hesitation, I asked a number of pastors and mission educators how their churches attempt to do this.

It is clear that many churches find imaginative ways to keep the world on their agenda. If you are interested in developing a global awareness in your congregation, there are several principles you can use.

Putting the world on your agenda requires a *long-term commitment.* It involves changing your worldview, a substantial task. Make a personal commitment to work at this for a long time. Try to form a missions committee or task force to help you.

Recognize the key role of the church leadership. While a missions committee may give direction to the work of outreach and education, the attitude of the pastor is crucial. One person who has served as both pastor and mission/service administrator says the pastor has to "give permission" to bring the issues to the congregation.

Global awareness is a threatening idea to some who feel it will dilute the energies of the church or take money away from meeting the church budget. As one person with pastoral experience put it, "It's hard to compete with Kurds stranded on the hills of Iraq."

A holistic view of missions may help diffuse that fear. Adopting a global view requires looking beyond ourselves to caring about others, which forms the impulse for local mission/service efforts. Jesus instructed the disciples to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth," but he told them to start in Jerusalem, their home.

Affirm the people in your congregation who have done or are doing local service. Many older men did alternative service during the war. Mennonite Disaster Service is a regular part of many peoples' lives. Others help out at Mennonite Central Committee relief sales or thrift shops. Give them chances to share their experience in your church.

Your pastor will usually be an ally when you begin to consciously inject a global consciousness into church life. Many have travel and study experiences that make them receptive to global issues, and they are even eager for help from others in the congregation to elevate these concerns. "My friends in the mission agencies cautioned me against taking a local church," said one missionary-turned-pastor. "They warned that pastoring is an intensely parochial experience.

"I try to keep world mission in front of the church," he continues. "In my pastoral prayer, I regularly pray by name for the members of our congregation who are in overseas service. My interpretation of the biblical text reflects a viewpoint that is wider than North America."

Strengthen this process by establishing an international mindset in your congregation. Sing songs from the Mennonite World Conference Hymnbook (Mennonite World Conference, PO Box 88836, Carol Stream, IL 60188-

Dave Schrock-Shenk is global education coordinator for the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section. Dave and his wife, Carolyn, served as MCC Manila representatives from 1985-88.

0836). Use and discuss songs with an international background from the *Mennonite Hymnal*. Put a world map on the wall of your church. The new Peters Projection map (available from Friendship Press, PO Box 37844, Cincinnati OH 45222-0844) shows countries of the world in better relationship to each other than older maps. Observe the church calendar, with Mennonite World Conference Sunday and South African Day of Prayer, to name two.

Pilgrim Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., has had fun with international potlucks. You can find international recipes in the new cookbook, commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee and published by Herald Press, called *Extending the Table*. Or choose a single country, and invite a person from that country who lives in your area to join your group for a meal.

People in many churches are experiencing international travel through study terms at college, short-term service assignments, business travel, learning tours, and vacations. Pray for these people before they leave. Give them a chance to share before and after they travel. They have credibility in your congregation. People will be interested in what they say. This kind of sharing helps us *think* about people in other countries.

Many congregations have members serving overseas in mission and service assignments. Put excerpts from their newsletters in your church bulletin or newsletter. Work their stories into your children's church. Allow these people to share when they are home on leave. Encourage them to tell you about the individuals they work with. This sharing helps us *care* about people in other countries.

Encourage interaction the other way. Charlotte Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., puts stamped aerograms addressed to their overseas workers on their church bulletin board for anyone to use. Many parents visit their children in their mission/service setting. Some congregations send small delegations to visit.

You can move to more structured activities that promote a global agenda once there is a basic commitment to the idea in your group. Many churches feature a missions spotlight on Sunday morning. In some, one person speaks for one minute every Sunday morning on a different ministry. Others invite congregational members or outside groups to share for five minutes once a month. Congregations can include international subjects as electives for their Christian education hour.

Inform your congregation about the resources of the larger church. CROP Walk Against Hunger involves members of many local churches. You can designate a portion of the money you raise to the agency of your choice (Church World Service, Office on Community Outreach, PO Box 968, Elkhart IN 46515). Bread for the World has materials that will enable your group to do everything from focusing on hunger for one Sunday, to becoming a Covenant Church that adopts hunger as a primary focus (Bread for the World, 802 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, Washington DC 20018). This kind of sharing allows us to *serve* people in other countries.

Some congregations work through a mission agency to sponsor a particular overseas project. One pastor reported that this move has brought some tension to their church. "Some people question whether we as a congregation can know enough and be humble enough to do cross-cultural service in another country. The fact that we've started to talk about doing a project overseas makes us grapple with that question."

That reality is perhaps the most crucial feature of global awareness: it can be very uncomfortable to learn about the needs of the world. If hearing about the world situation always makes us feel helpless and frustrated, we will soon shut ourselves off from such information. One excellent resource that speaks to this problem is *Tales of the Heart: Affective Approaches to Global Education* (Friendship Press).

"Our theology says that service is part of the calling of Jesus," explained one mission education coordinator. We are part of a global church, where each part is affected by the other, and has responsibility for the other. Our faith will be increased and our service enriched, as we begin to learn and care about the rest of the world.

The Role of the Missionary as Mission Educator

JEANNIE ZEHR

"Will missionaries soon be extinct?" queried Pastor Tim Lehman as he addressed his central Kansas congregation in a 1990 church newsletter. "The answer is 'yes' if it depends on our congregation to provide the people," he lamented. Lehman's concern arose from his evaluation of statistics which reflected the congregation's downward trend of involvement in voluntary service and mission programs over the past fifteen years.

"Without the experience of national and international service and missions, how will our church stay in touch with the world? From where will our future leadership come? What is to keep us from becoming more and more internally focused?" asked Lehman. "How do we change the present trend? How can we bring service and mission back into the heart of our gospel message at Eden?" were further questions he raised for consideration.

As I traverse the North American continent, pastors and lay persons articulate the same dilemma in a variety of ways. A struggle is on to discover new approaches to educate and energize people for mission interest and involvement. They want to instill the truth that when God calls us to receive Christ's salvation, we are set aside to serve others in Christ's name. When our eyes truly see Christ, we see others with new eyes—eyes of compassion that call us to give of ourselves willingly to spiritually and physically feed the hungry souls and bodies of the world.

When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, "they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27, NIV). This reporting to the sending church people opened their eyes to see Christ, to see others. It further motivated the church for world mission. It stimulated

Jeannie Zehr has been secretary of mission communications for the Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church since 1985.

them to send out others. Personal interaction built interest and energy. Things began to happen.

In an after-supper sharing time in an Oklahoma church, one man stated his deep-felt thoughts. "It all seems so far away. We lack knowledge and friendship. How can we make mission more personal? I want to become more personally involved."

The baby boomer generation born between 1946 and 1964, followed by the baby buster generation born from 1965 on, bring with them values, lifestyles, and expectations shaped by different world and national events than those of previous generations. We of the pre-baby boomer generations must confess that our own values and lifestyles have gradually changed in response to the world in which we live. We all bring different agenda and expectations to the call to respond to the great commission, to make disciples of all nations.

In recent years as television has invaded our family rooms, the world has arrived on our doorsteps. We no longer need to trek to the mission worker's program to see exotic slides of life beyond our hometown. We are a people with a thirst to be quenched by entertainment. Our senses have been dulled by glitzy video and computeritis. A trickle of faithful ones show up for midweek or Sunday evening programs in our churches.

Jonathan Larson, General Conference Mennonite missionary to Botswana who has itinerated extensively for the Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Central Committee during the past two years, has observed that the former approach of itinerating families with slides and curios has attracted less interest and attendance in recent years. "However quaint this approach may seem now," says Larson, "it left the congregation a vivid personal image of mission, knitted strong personal bonds and an abiding sense of mutual accountability and shared mission." When mission workers have not interacted extensively with the sending church people, "the critical bonds with the wider 'people of mission' never had a chance to develop," reflects Larson.

During his visits to over 100 churches, Jonathan has been converted to the realization "that the task is a seamless one requiring us to exercise the same mission gifts 'here' as 'there.'"

Mission educators now need a smorgasbord of approaches to appeal to and challenge the spectrum of our church population. We must dispel the myths about who mission workers are and how overseas ministry is done in the 1990s. We need to provide opportunities for personal interaction and building of relationships with workers. Forums for discussion of issues and relating today's news headlines to missions need to happen. People want to hear about the problems, the vision for working on the problems, and how they personally can be part of the solutions.

Who better can share the stories, dispel the myths, make the distant come close at hand, as well as present the issues, problems, and visions for their solutions, than the workers whom we too have sent forth? Personal interaction and relationship building includes those workers as a necessary ingredient.

This seamless task presents some dilemmas in itself. There are currently fewer long-term workers serving. Short-term assignments are the demand of the day. Relationships take time to build, especially when workers can have "in-the-flesh contact" with sending churches only every three or four years. About the time a congregation and worker feel as family with one another, the worker may well complete his or her service and return to a North American job.

The call to this seamless task means that workers, especially long-term ones, must give high priority to itineration and church relationships, to preparation and creative use of their gifts and experiences. Professional pursuits while on North American assignment should perhaps be scheduled around church contact plans, rather than the reverse.

Mission agencies seek to send well-prepared workers overseas. Some provide financial assistance for educational costs. Mission workers study long hours to prepare to minister effectively in another culture. If communication for mission education in North American churches is given high priority, then we need to give higher priority to preparation of workers for the sharing they do with the sending church people.

Preparation means helping to focus the message workers have to share, working at developing better audiovisuals and displays, and prescribing a public speaking course for those needing such.

With cross-cultural mission on our North American doorstep, many of our Mennonite people, especially in urban settings, are exposed to problems and questions similar to those experienced by persons serving overseas. Overseas workers and agency staff persons need to dialogue with these people. There are many ways that we can mutually resource one another's work and understanding.

Education continues when workers return to their overseas assignments. Their communication with the sending church people must be strong and frequent to enable the relationships to grow and provide bridges for learning. Such bridges will encourage two-way traffic.

Yes, today's mission worker is an invaluable key for unlocking the door to education for mission interest and involvement. It may feel like a heavy burden is being placed on the worker. Returning to words shared by Jonathan Larson after many itineration encounters, he states that he has also been "converted to realizing that the encounter with our communities in North America, far from depleting meager resources, can yield both comfort and energy needed for the mission task." He has been deeply moved by the faith stories he has heard from those in the sending churches across North America. He has been touched by "a fragile web of searching prayers breathed in his presence."

"What energizes me in all of this," reflects Larson, "is to visualize this host of Christians as my sending community. It is in large measure their labor and sacrifice, their vision and prayer, their passion and struggle that give meaning to who I am and what I do as I return to the paths and courtyards of southern Africa."

Might we be so bold as to suggest that education for mission is also a seamless task for those of us called to be the sending body?

The "Noissim Festival":
An Effective Tool for Mission Education

MARY ELLEN MEYER

"Make a joyful noissim to the Lord" was the phrase that kept running through my head as we planned for the Mission Festival at Goshen, Indiana—an event cosponsored by the Indiana-Michigan Conference and the Mennonite Board of Missions. The idea for the name "Noissim Festival" from *mission* spelled backward was suggested by one of the younger members of the planning committee. It was intended to convey the idea of reorienting our thinking about mission in our congregations and of turning around our approach to meet future needs. The logo, with its mirror image, made this clear. We found, however, that some people thought it sounded like something noisy and disorderly, and others didn't seem to know *what* it meant as readily as the committee thought they would. So you may want to keep that in mind as you plan your festival and give it a name!

What sort of an event might capture the imaginations of the whole family, function as a focal point for the conference or region, and excite people the way mission conferences or rallies used to about the possibilities of sharing the gospel the world over? How can people feel they are participating? How can they hear missionary stories? What can push them to test a personal call? These were some of the questions that continued to be in the background as we worked at shaping the event for November 1990.

We settled on a weekend—Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings. The evening mass meetings would be celebrative worship services, but with no long speeches! Each one was to begin with a procession, one with banners made by different congregations, and the other with international costumes worn by teenagers. This set a festive tone in a gymnasium decorated with crepe paper, banners, and flags. We planned a service around short testimonies and stories, skits, slides of summer service projects of various MYF groups, congregational hymns, choral groups and special music, Scripture, and prayer. Sunday evening Ned Wyse challenged us to be doing business for the Master with a dramatization of the parable of the ten talents. The pace was lively, and the time seemed short.

We also wanted some settings for dealing more seriously with topics related to mission. How do we spur a congregation along toward mission thinking? What about youth and mission? What are the issues the Mennonite Board of Missions is dealing with in our world today? What about local mission? How do we include concern for mission in our worship? Should we add new people to our congregation or plant a new church? How do we keep people who have come to our congregation through outreach efforts? How can we best use the people in our congregations who have mission experience; how can we hear their stories? These questions were addressed in smaller settings in seminars during the afternoons. Festival participants could attend two seminars each day.

But I think most people would agree that the times generating the most excitement and capturing the interest of all ages were the two-and-a-half hour blocks between the afternoon and evening sessions called the "International Bazaar." Six international environments were set up with the aim of giving the impression of being there. A time to stimulate the senses: to taste the foods, smell the aromas, hear the music, see the colors and sights; to feel the fabrics, the dough, the weight of the pot on your head. Have your picture taken in an international costume from the MCC clothes closet, buy an apple from the little apple-sellers in the halls, climb onto a wooden camel, experience the quiet of a Taize worship service, listen to the strolling musicians, rest your feet while sipping a hot or cold drink in the sidewalk cafe. Children and teens entered into these activities enthusiastically, parents tried to keep up, and volunteers were buoyed by the general excitement.

As you can imagine, many hours of volunteered time went into the planning and carrying out of this festival, and it was with satisfaction that we watched the large number of people who came to enjoy it. We hope that it will set the stage for a yearly emphasis in our congregations on some mission theme, varying in format and scope, but keeping before us the Lord's call to be a missionary people wherever we are.

What are some things we learned that might be helpful to you as you plan a mission festival?

- The event must fit the facility available. We were very fortunate to have the use of Bethany Christian High School, which was perfect for the type of gathering we planned. If a church or smaller school is the location for the festival, perhaps you could focus on one international environment and plan just a few pertinent seminars. The size of the worship space will determine how widely you want to publicize the event.
- Begin to plan early so that congregations will clear their schedules and avoid major conflicts, such as high school sports events. Early planning also makes it easier to enlist help in food preparation, program planning, decorating, childcare, and the many other ways you will want to involve congregational participants. If you bring in outside speakers or musical groups, mission board personnel, retired or current missionaries, or seminar leaders, they will also need plenty of lead time.
- Remember the children. We had a very able and energetic person heading a committee planning child care. We decided to plan activities for children through junior high during the seminar times, and childcare for those two-and-under during worship times. This attention to all ages, plus the intergenerational appeal of the bazaar meant we had a very good attendance from young families and teens. If mission education does not appeal to young people, its main reason for being is lost.

Mary Ellen Meyer is a nurse/homemaker who works as a community volunteer and helper in a new congregation in Goshen, Indiana. She and her husband, Albert, have five grown children.

• Utilize natural connections in soliciting help from congregations. If a congregational member is in an overseas or home mission assignment, there will be a good link in gathering artifacts, pictures, and decorating ideas. Food preparation can be made lighter by assigning certain parts to different congregations. One congregation can be responsible for a large quantity of rice. Another can be given a recipe to prepare the sauce or topping appropriate to the country of choice. Encourage congregations to be creative in including children and young people in the preparations. When more persons help, more will want to come to see how it all turns out!

• Plan an organized publicity schedule. Send posters to the congregations and think of newspapers, radio spots, or other likely publicity channels. Plan three or four bulletin announcements to be used in the weeks immediately prior to the festival. Perhaps a skit announcement could be written that could be presented on Sunday morning by MYF members. Give careful thought throughout your planning to the broadest possible participation you can get from area congregational members in the actual organization, setting up, and carrying out of the program.

The old adage says, "We learn to do by doing." Mission education happens when we involve our members in deciding themes, thinking through issues, and coming to terms concretely with what it means to share the good news of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in our time and place. We found that planning and experiencing a "Noissim Festival" did just that.

Reaching Across Cultures Through "Christmas International Homes"

NATHAN HEGE

Christmas International Homes, a program of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, has been placing students in homes over the Christmas holidays for nineteen years. Last year 89 students from 16 nations were placed with 75 families in the greater Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area.

In 1972 Chester Wenger, then director of Home Ministries, discovered Christmas International House in Atlanta, coordinator of visits for international students. He learned that 70 percent of the 145,000 international students then studying in the United States never got invited into an American home. Wenger established Eastern Board's own CIH which stands for Christmas International Homes. Working through the Atlanta office, Home Ministries placed 62 students that year in Mennonite homes.

Through the years the program has steadily grown. Home Ministries now aims to place 100 students each year. The record number was 97 in 1989.

Students usually arrive in the Lancaster area about December 19. Their host families have made previous contact with them and given them directions to their house or arranged to pick them up at a local airport, train or bus station.

One student couple, in a thank-you note to their hosts, said they were overwhelmed by "a feeling of trust when we walked into your home which was open to greet and welcome us with love and warmth." The couple was delayed because of making a wrong turn, and their hosts, Clarence and Ellen Neff, had to leave for an appointment. To find the Neff home unlocked with a welcome note waiting was a remarkable show of trust. The couple wrote, "If everybody on earth could trust each other like you did, this earth would be a much happier place."

In writing up the event for *Missionary Messenger,* Ellen said, "Love crosses all barriers. Christ's love flowing through us reaches out and touches the lives of others, no matter what race, creed, or culture." The Neffs have participated in CIH for many years, and therefore, have "children and grandchildren" in many parts of the world.

In a typical year Eastern Board's CIH program begins with a get-acquainted social and includes a visit to historical sights in Lancaster County and a trip to Washington, D.C. A highlight is a one- or two-day retreat where students hear a presentation of the Christian faith and learn about Mennonite history. For some it is the first time they have heard the beliefs that form the basis for Christian practice.

Anthropologist Donald Jacobs, a frequent instructor at these retreats, describes the CIH program as a cross-cultural experience. "If you want to understand your hosts, you must know what they believe," he tells the students. Near the end of his lectures he suggests, "If you like what you see, you may want to make a further investigation of Jesus Christ."

Host families do not pressure students to convert. Mabel Ristenbatt, a widow who lives alone, prays that her guests will "feel the presence of the Lord in her home. It is a privilege to be a missionary in my own home," she says.

After his host had asked a blessing on a meal, an army general from Taiwan said, "I had never heard anyone pray before. My emotions have been deeply touched; it did something for me." Then he continued, "Actually, we are searching; we have an emptiness for which we have not found an answer." And in a later conversation, "If only the whole world could be like your community, we would not need any more missiles." Before he left he concluded, "I have decided that sometime I want to become a Christian."

In 1983 a middle-aged exchange scholar from China wrote about his playing with a Chinese top in the home of his host. "I felt as if I had returned to my childhood of thirty years ago. What a beautiful recall!" He described CIH as "a friendship bridge, not only between international students and Americans, but also among all the countries of the world."

Today over 300,000 international students are studying at U.S. universities and colleges. And the percentage of those who learn to know an American family has not improved. Many of them return to their homeland to take influential positions in government or business. Even after four years in this country of freedom and plenty, some go

Nathan Hege is news writer in the Church Relations Department at Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions since 1974. Nathan served in Ethiopia 1950-74. He is also bishop of the Willow Street-Strasburg District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference.

home with the impression that America is a selfish, individualistic nation. CIH in its small way tries to change this.

And most hosts do their best to make the experience for the students a good one. The Home Ministries office encourages host families to read widely on the country and religion of their guests. The department provides a handbook for hosts. Donna Metzler, current coordinator for CIH, arranges for hosts and students to have telephone contact before their arrival. In October of each year, she secures the names from CIH, Atlanta, and begins to match students and hosts for a positive mutual experience.

Donna says some organizations hosting internationals will turn their church into a dormitory for the two-week period. But she believes the personal contact in homes is a much better way to assure an effective program.

Families or singles who once host students are usually eager to do it again. One couple said they never suspected that a Muslim could have so many questions about Christian faith. "Our discussions lasted till midnight. We wouldn't have believed that we could feel so comfortable discussing Christianity with someone of another religion," they said. Many host families keep in touch with their student and some form long-lasting friendships.

The holiday visit ends with an international meal and a talent show put on for the hosts by the students. By this time a bond has been formed, and students and host families pledge themselves to keep in touch. The goodbyes are reluctant and long. Both students and hosts are surprised that friendships can become so meaningful in just two weeks time.

Mission Education:
A Beginning Bibliography of Written Resources

JAMES R. KRABILL

GLOBAL AWARENESS

Make a World of Difference: Creative Activities for Global Learning. Produced for Church World Service by the Office on Global Education. Baltimore: National Council of Churches (2115 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218-5755), 1989, 279 pp.

Helpful, practical suggestions on how to build community, think globally, understand hunger, prepare international meals, make use of cartoons, the arts, and various audiovisuals.

A Brief Guide to World News in Reviews. By James R. Krabill. Published as a special supplement in the Winter 1987 issue of *Festival Quarterly* (3513 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534), 8 pp.

A guide to over 200 magazines which provide news coverage of world events. Sources are organized by geographical divisions, subject matter, form used in reporting, and depth of content.

Cultural Awareness for Young Children. By Earldene McNeill, Judy Allen, Velma Schmidt, and Barbara McNeill Brierton. Dallas: The Learning Tree, 1981, 160 pp.

Creative introduction to six cultures (Asian, African-American, cowboy, Eskimo, Mexican and Native American) through exercises involving art expression, language development, music, dance, games, etc.

WORLD CHRISTIANITY

The Quiet Revolution: The Story of a Living Faith Around the World. Robin Keeley, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, 384 pp.

An attractive overview of Christianity in today's world. Deals with issues facing the worldwide church family in its various forms (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, etc.) and contexts (Africa, Asia, Europe, etc.).

Global Christians. A weekly newsletter produced by James R. Krabill. Available upon request from Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370.

A one- to two-page weekly newssheet produced during the academic year for use in educational settings. Most articles are reprints of materials dealing with a wide range of issues: marriage in Africa, crackdown in China, martyrdom in Central America, etc.

RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

Banquet of Praise. Bread for the World (802 Rhode Island Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20018), 231 pp.

A book of worship resources, hymns, and songs in the spirit of justice, peace, and food for all.

With All God's People: The New Ecumenical Prayer Cycle. John Carden, compiler. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989, 389 pp. Also in the same series, an *Orders of Service* guide, 133 pp.

Pray and sing your way around the globe with a different geographical focus each week.

MENNONITE DENOMINATIONAL MATERIALS

"Mission Education." By Willard E. Roth. Encyclopedia entry in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia V.* Scottdale: Herald Press, 1990, pp. 594-595.

Survey of attempts to work at mission education in the Mennonite Church from the late 1950s to 1983.

James Krabill has served with his wife, Jeanette, in Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa (1978-88). Currently they are involved in a special three-year Mennonite Board of Missions assignment in mission education with Mennonite congregations and conferences in North America.

Mennonite World Handbook: Mennonites in Global Witness. Gotz Lichdi, ed. Carol Stream, IL: Mennonite World Conference, 1990, 440 pp.

Over 65 articles by Mennonites from around the world. Includes 120 pages of charts and statistics reporting by country and conference on the Mennonite family worldwide.

"Mennonite Mission Resources: A Planning Guide for Congregational and Church School Leaders." Copublished by Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Publishing House, 1985, 16 pp.

A list of Anabaptist-Mennonite mission books and study resources available from Mennonite Publishing House (616 Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, PA 15683) or from one of the church's mission/service agencies.

MCC Resource Catalog 1990/1991. Available from Mennonite Central Committee in U.S. (21 South 12th Street, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500) or Canada (134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9, Canada).

Films, slide sets, videos, filmstrips, periodicals, posters, brochures, fliers, booklets—currently available from MCC.

Ideas for Celebrating Missions in 1990 and Beyond. Produced by and available from Commission on Overseas Mission, General Conference Mennonite Church (722 Main Street, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347), 1990, 144 pp.

Prepared for the 90th anniversary of General Conference mission work. Includes helpful ideas for celebrative worship, planning mission events, games, displays, etc. Good bibliography of other materials available, i.e., "Neighbors Near and Far."

MISSION EDUCATION FOR DISTRICT CONFERENCES

Mission Outreach Ideabook. Produced by Franconia Mennonite Conference Mission Commission, 1991.

A loose-leaf notebook of "resources for congregations, families, and individuals" divided into five sections: 1) congregational outreach resources, 2) Franconia Conference mission committee activities, 3) MBM, 4) MCC, 5) local outreach. A good model for conferences elsewhere!

FOR CONGREGATIONS

A Mind for Missions. By Paul Borthwick. Colorado Springs: NAVPRESS, 1987, 167 pp.

Ten ways for a congregation to build a world vision (e.g., the Scriptures, current events, prayer, reading, etc.).

Association of Church Missions Committees (ACMC) materials. Available from: ACMC, PO Box ACMC, Wheaton, IL 60190.

Includes a wide range of resources: Missions Education Handbook, a regular newsletter—"Mobilizer," seminars held nationwide, etc.

FOR YOUTH

Youth and Missions: Expanding Your Students' World View. By Paul Borthwick. Victor Books, 1988, 160 pp.

Illustrates the need to expand worldviews by example, exposure, and experience.

Ideas for Social Action: A Handbook on Mission and Service for Christian Young People. By Anthony Campolo. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983, 162 pp.

Myriads of practical suggestions on how to involve youth in service projects, work camps, mission trips, fundraisers, etc. A 30-page annotated list of "agencies and organizations committed to social action" is included.

"Mustard Seeds." Compiled and packaged by Mennonite Board of Missions (PO Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370), 1985.

A handy box of 3x5-inch cards giving seasonal suggestions on how youth groups can become involved in service projects. Available from MBM Service Ministries.

FOR CHILDREN

I Heard Good News Today: Stories for Children. By Cornelia Lehn. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press (718 Main Street, Newton, KS 67114), 1983, 148 pp.

Ninety-three short stories of witness throughout history (John Mark, Saint Patrick, Boniface) and around the world (Europe, India, China, etc.).

52 Ways to Teach Missions. By Nancy S. Williamson. San Diego: Rainbow Publisher, 1989, 64 pp.

Fifty-two easy-to-do activities for ages 4-12 (e.g., "adopt a missionary," missions club, festive events, music of the world, progressive dinner, etc.).

Making Missions Meaningful. By Judy Rice and Marilyn Schneider. Wheaton: Pioneer Clubs, 1990, 66 pp.

Develops the missions theme in the context of kids' clubs through games, snacks, "read-aloud stories," puzzles, etc.

In Review

Daktar II. By Vic Olsen. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1990, 586 pp., $16.95.

Reviewed by Dorothy Yoder Nyce

Not having read Olsen's first book, I cannot compare the two. This one details Bangladesh's struggle to become a democratic nation. Of second import is its description of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism's medical work at Memorial Christian Hospital, Malumghat.

Bangladesh heritage—British India and East Pakistan—is scanned prior to the main decade, 1972-81. With Bengali and Muslim predominance (98 and 80 percent respectively) a question recurs: Is Bangladesh a secular or Islamic state? Statistics tell democracy's struggle: 1979 elections found 2,000 candidates from 30 parties campaigning for 300 Parliament seats. Gaining respect within the United Nations and among neighbors while avoiding the next coup at home necessitated poise and prudence. *Rawktodesh*, meaning "nation of blood," repeats itself in plots and coups (major and aborted), demonstrations, political prisoners, martial law, mutiny, and government executions.

Olsen's personal contacts with top officials—in local Chittagong District or capital Dacca/Dhaka—give reports a factual flavor. Connections, diligent prayer, and medical aid often assist negotiations over problems such as mission visas. Solutions "in the nick of (God's) time" may enamor some readers. The doctor does function in dramatic doses. Curing of rare conditions like grotesque tumors, severe skin burns, rabies, and acute appendicitis are followed with Dr. Olsen's "Thank you, Father." Routine care or "unsuccessful" cases are less noticeable.

Style is that of a reporter. Photographs, charts, and maps supplement the listing of each year's events at the end of chapters. The quality of transitions between places or events varies. The "I" content at times abounds.

Other mission activities include translation of Scripture into a common Bengali language, training and support for workers among tribal communities, and teaching. Family separations—as when four Olsen children left for high school and college—were painful to Joan and Vic. Painful to me was the difference in assignment, identity, and credit given to missionary wives. Health problems recurred among them.

In a country the size of Iowa, population doubled between 1962-85, reaching 100 million. This, along with calamities of both drought and devastating floods, spelled famine and poverty, further complicated by the influx of Bengali refugees escaping oppression in Burma. I trust *Daktar III* will sensitively attend to the heartbreak of poverty. How the poor experience nation building could be instructive.

Dorothy Yoder Nyce, a part-time assistant professor at Goshen College and a writer, has been a teacher at Christian international schools in India.

Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes. Edited by Paul J. Griffiths. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 286 pp., $29.95, $14.95 (pb).

Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism. By Aloysius Pieris, SJ. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988, 160 pp., $13.95 (pb).

The Meaning of Christ: A Mahayana Theology. By John P. Keenan. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989, 312 pp., $29.95, $16.95 (pb).

Reviewed by C. Norman Kraus

The reader is entitled to ask immediately why these three books should be reviewed in one article. The answer is that they are quite complementary in their approach to the subject of religious pluralism and the possibility of dialogue between religious traditions.

The first book, *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes*, is a selection of writings from Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu authors who have commented at length on the significance of Christianity from the perspective of their own religions. Griffiths has done an excellent job of selecting a variety of viewpoints—some quite critical—in the different religious traditions, and in giving the reader a brief introduction to each of the traditions and writers.

Griffiths allows us without comment to hear the authors' perceptions of Christian beliefs, attitudes, and approaches to other religions. We are introduced to their candid evaluation of their own religious systems, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of Christianity both as a belief system and as a dominant cultural force in the world. This is the kind of data that anyone who is even slightly interested in interreligious dialogue needs to be aware of.

In *Love Meets Wisdom*, Pieris, who is director of a dialogue center in Sri Lanka, is interested in a depth dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity. He calls it a "core-to-core" dialogue, by which he means a dialogue in which each religion experiences the other at the level of its "liberative experience." At the heart of that experience in Buddhism is *gnosis* (enlightenment) and in Christianity is *agape* (self-sacrificing love). While these two are in tension, he claims that they are complementary, not contradictory, and each needs the other to give it theological depth.

He pleads for a Christology "that does not compete with Buddhology but complements it by acknowledging the one path of liberation on which Christians join Buddhists in their gnostic detachment ... and Buddhists join the Christian agapeic involvement in the struggle against 'forced poverty' as it truly happens today in the basic human communities in Asia." In such a dialogue "co-pilgrims expound their respective scriptures, retelling the story of Jesus and Gautama in a core-to-core dialogue that makes their hearts burn (Luke 24:32) and it is only at the end of the path, as at Emmaus, that the path itself will be recognized by name (ibid.) if a 'name' would then be necessary" (p. 135).

The book is a compilation of articles and addresses which Pieris made in the 1970s and early 1980s. Although not in a strictly systematic sequence, the chapters provide a theological and historical analysis of the relation between the two religions, a depth understanding of Buddhism, and a suggestion for the way ahead in dialogue. Pieris is convinced that Christianity must relinquish its power base and meet Buddhism in a genuinely agapeic encounter. In such an encounter, the claims for Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God will become evident in the Spirit-empowered lives of his followers, and not in competitive theological discussion. In his own metaphor, he thinks that Christian missionaries to Buddhist nations must be willing to be baptized in the Buddhist "Jordan" just as Jesus allowed himself to be baptized by John in the Jewish Jordan.

Pieris is quite candid about the clear differences and the tension between the two ways. There is a rivalry between Buddhist and Christian claims that is not present in the relation of Hinduism and Christianity. Both religions claim that their founders are the "absolute medium of salvation." Like Christianity it makes exclusive claims for its way of salvation.

Further, unlike Hinduism, Buddhism is not intrinsically syncretistic. In Hindu cultures syncretism becomes a major problem when contextualizing the gospel. But although Buddhism, especially in its Mahayana tradition, has developed syncretistic tendencies, it is originally a protest

against such syncretism. Thus in its confrontation with Christian claims, it cannot, like Hinduism, simply find an appropriate niche for Jesus in its system.

For this reason perhaps the missiological approach to Buddhist cultures requires a different style of contextualization. Not only as a competitive strategy, but as a matter of authentic presentation, one must identify with the Buddhist culture and adhere strictly to kerygmatic proclamation and humble demonstration of the power of agape. This, in any case, is what I hear Pieris pleading for; and from my own experience in Japan, I am inclined to concur.

In the end it is a difference between a religion of *jiriki* (self-power) and *tariki* (salvation through another's power). With the exception of Amidism in Japan and China, the Buddha does not function as savior in the sense as Jesus. In this regard the original Teravada tradition is more consistently preserved in Zen. Evangelical mission strategists will undoubtedly have some trouble accepting Pieris' resolution of this issue.

What troubles me in Pieris' approach is his implicit reduction of salvation to the liberative experience of voluntary poverty. For example, he says, "The only meeting point of the gnostic and the agapeic models of spirituality is the belief that voluntary poverty constitutes a salvific experience" (p. 87). He seems to grant the Buddha and his followers salvation and sainthood by virtue of the gnostic way of asceticism in spite of their unwillingness to "repent" and trust in God's agape.

Thus the process of witness begins by finding a common point of meeting in vocational poverty and dialogically working out a complementary way. Christians help Buddhists to more clearly recognize the agapeic dimensions of their gnostic commitment, and Buddhists help Christians understand the necessity of liberative knowledge. Such a program seems to fit better with a definition of salvation as nirvana than as a joyful reconciliation with the ultimate personal Savior of the universe. At this point the theological difference between Buddhism's "no God, no soul" doctrine and the Christian doctrine of God as ultimate personal Creator and Redeemer are not only in tension. They are contradictory.

Keenan's volume, *The Meaning of Christ: A Mahayana Theology*, approaches the interaction of religious traditions from yet another perspective. He is interested in how the theoretical reflections of theology relate to the mystical awareness of reality. How does the theological proposition that Jesus is the Son of God relate to the awakening and lived experience of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God? "This book," he writes, "is ... an invitation to appropriate Christian interiority, to identify its contours, to put on the mind of Christ" (p. 1).

He is convinced that Greek philosophy, which underlies the ecumenical creeds, does not provide an adequate analytical base for relating ineffable ultimate truth, which is perceived in mystical awareness, and rational statements of that truth in theoretical propositions. It is not that the rational statements are wrong, but rather that they cannot be equated with the reality.

Noting this inadequacy, Keenan turns to the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism for an analytical base. The Yogacaras especially wrestled with the problem of the relation of the mystical, nondual awareness of "emptiness" to the empirical subject-object dualism of our everyday experience, and with the possibility of making meaningful rational statements about the mystical reality. Thus he makes use of Yogacara analytic in place of the Platonic in order to develop a Christian understanding of Jesus as the Christ.

Although it was not his primary goal, by working in this way with the Buddhist tradition much as the early church fathers worked with the Platonic tradition, he has suggested an approach to contextualizing the gospel message in a Buddhist setting. After explaining the language and structure of Mahayana thought he concludes: "If the early Christian proclamation of the gospel had fallen on ears accustomed to hearing such doctrines, the understanding of Christ as wisdom would have been an obvious avenue toward understanding what Christ means. But it is not too late; perhaps the Christian community is still in its adolescence" (p.186). Perhaps, indeed, it is not too late to make a more agapeic approach to authentic sharing of the good news before Asia is engulfed by modern technology and secularism.

C. Norman Kraus currently lives in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and serves as interim pastor at the Community Mennonite Congregation.

Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador. Edited by Jon Sobrino. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, xxviii + 180 pp., $9.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Ray Gingerich

During the November 1989 Salvadoran insurrection, national troops invaded the priests' headquarters of the Jesuit-run Simeon Canas University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador. Following instructions that originated within the highest military levels, they brutally murdered six Jesuit priests—including the rector, Ignacio Ellacuria—and the housekeeper and her daughter.

Jon Sobrino, a member of this community, escaped death that night because he happened to be out of the country. Sobrino is a leading Central American theologian and author of numerous major works including *Theology at the Crossroads* and *Spirituality of Liberation*, both by Orbis Books. *Companions of Jesus* opens with a brief but well-documented account of the massacre. Then, in a long and stirring memoir written in the weeks immediately following the tragedy, Sobrino uses the occasion to focus on the vision his companions embodied: The option for the poor, the commitment to justice, and the oneness with Christ crucified in history (incarnation) as demonstrated in the ministry of the university, the social reality of a persecuted church, and the legacy of a theology of liberation combined with hope in the coming kingdom of God.

The larger remaining segment of the work consists of selected writings by the six priests bearing out these themes and prophetically underscoring why the companions were killed. Parts of it, particularly Ellacuria's, read like the modern-day counterpart of Conrad Grebel and Michael Sattler: "The true people of God in a world dominated by sin cannot but be persecuted, because as people of God it seeks to negate sin and to establish a Reign that to a great extent is the negation of existing structures" (p. 64).

For *Mission Focus* readers specifically interested in the relevancy of *Companions of Jesus* for the mission of the church, let me conclude with this statement from Sobrino: "There can be neither faith nor gospel without incarnation. And with a crucified people, there can be no incarnation without the cross.... Sin brings death, but taking it on, gives credibility. By sharing in the cross of the Salvadorans, the church becomes Salvadoran and thus credible" (pp. 54-55).

Ray Gingerich is professor of church studies at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia; he served with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions from 1961-68 in Luxembourg.

Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker. By Gerald A. Arbuckle. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 236 pp., $16.95 (pb).

Reviewed by James Pankratz

This book is written primarily for "evangelizers who have little or no knowledge of anthropology" (p. 14), emphasizing the "culture side of inculturation" (p. 1).

The author is a Marist priest who has taught at the East Asia Pastoral Institute in the Philippines since 1977. He writes as a Catholic who has wide experience with and deep appreciation for evangelical Protestants.

The book's three major sections describe culture and cultural change using the concepts of symbol and myth, outline pastoral issues in inculturation, focusing on models of Christian community, ritual, sects, subcultures, and immigrant groups, and suggest how the pastor can be an agent of inculturation. It highlights how Jesus and the early church faced challenges similar to those encountered by Christians in today's multicultural world.

This is a handbook for those working within their own culture or in a new culture. Each chapter has study questions and lists of resources, with plenty of diagrams and numerous case studies. An index would be useful.

James N. Pankratz, currently president of Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba, served with Mennonite Central Committee in Bangladesh (1982-85).

Prospects for Growth: A Biblical View of Population, Resources, and the Future. By E. Calvin Beisner. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1990, 282 pp., $8.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Carl Kreider

This is a rosy-tinted view that economic growth can continue into the indefinite future unhindered by excessive population growth or depletion of basic natural resources. This desirable outcome will come from God's people fulfilling the divine plan. The author confidently predicts that "barring major catastrophes, there is little reason to doubt that the vast majority of people will be comfortably wealthy in a few generations." History has demonstrated that the Malthusian fear of population pressures overwhelming the earth's resources is unwarranted and the law of diminishing returns has been replaced by the fact of increasing returns. All sectors of the world society benefit. "The popular belief that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer is, on the average and worldwide, simply not true. Both are getting richer."

The author is identified as "national chairman of the Economics Committee of the Coalition on Revival and has an M.A. in Society with a specialization in economic ethics." His book is documented with statistics from recognized sources such as the World Bank annual *World Development Reports*. But his own interpretation of the statistics and the authors of the books and articles he cites are clearly right-wing. An example is his confident assertion that "one theologically liberal denomination's protest that nuclear arms threaten all of creation, turn out to be mere imbecility." Beisner feels that nuclear energy is cleaner and safer than that from fossil fuels and will soon replace them.

The book's economic weakness stems from a faulty understanding of gross national product (GNP). Nowhere in the book did the author define it. Had he done so, he would have realized that huge governmental expenditures for sophisticated military equipment or expensive government buildings and monuments will increase GNP as much as equivalent expenditures for health care, education, and wholesome food and shelter for even the poorest of the world's poor. World statistics for distribution of income are scanty at best; U.S. figures show a growing gap between rich and poor in recent decades; longitudinal data for the poorer two-thirds of the world's people do not exist. (See *World Development Report 1989*, pp. 222-223.) The rich are indeed becoming richer, and some poor are also becoming richer (though usually at a much slower pace), but the gap between the rich and the poor worldwide has expanded in recent decades. Failure to come to grips with this fact is a basic cause of today's world turbulence.

Carl Kreider, an economist, is dean emeritus of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, and was first dean of the College of Liberal Arts of International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.

Planning Strategies for World Evangelization. By Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser. Revised edition. Monrovia, CA: MARC; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990, 349 pp., $15,95 (pb).

Reviewed by Erwin Rempel

Edward R. Dayton, vice-president of World Vision, and David Fraser, associate professor of sociology at Eastern College in Pennsylvania have completely revised and updated *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization* published by MARC in 1980.

The purpose of this book is to "present a ten-step planning model that can be applied to the process of thinking through any effort at cross-cultural evangelization."

Assumptions underlying the planning model include convictions that the day of Western mission is not past and that withdrawal from global evangelistic involvement is not an option in a world where billions have not yet heard of God's love in Jesus Christ. This understanding of the mission vision is consistent with the book's organizational heritage: Berlin Congress in 1966, Institute of Church Growth, Fuller School of World Mission, Lausanne Committee, and World Vision.

Mennonite mission and service workers will question the appropriateness of a Western planning model for cross-cultural contexts. Are the ten steps really applicable in Zaire, Brazil, and Hong Kong? The authors assure us that although the book is written from a Western perspective there has been considerable field testing in "various corners of our globe" which validate the use of this planning model.

This book is recommended for those interested and involved in global mission even if not everyone will share the same degree of enthusiasm for Western involvement. Perhaps we could benefit from listening to and learning from Dayton and Fraser.

Erwin Rempel, currently executive secretary of Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church, earlier served with COM in Brazil.

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EDITORIAL

It happens almost every time. At the close of a worship service during which my wife, Jeanette, and I have reported on some aspect of our ten years in Africa or on what we consider to be a few of the "issues facing missions," someone—often several persons—will come up to us and say, "This has been great! Our congregation really needed your message today. It's been a long time since we've had any solid input about missions in our church. You know, it just isn't like it used to be years ago. I can remember when I was growing up. . . ."

At this point in the conversation, there are a variety of memories from the past which are brought to our attention. A few of the most common include the following: "When I was growing up. . . ."

- we had missionaries from India and Africa coming through our home all the time."
- we had little round missionary banks in which we collected pennies, nickels, and dimes for mission projects overseas."
- our congregation held regular mission rallies to packed-out crowds who came to see the slides and hear the reports of missionaries home on furlough."
- we knew all the missionaries by name and prayed for them daily in family devotions."

Comments of this nature generally come from persons over fifty years of age. They are offered, not as mere statements of fact, but as matters of serious concern. There is a feeling of wistful nostalgia about the tone in which they are presented. There is a touch of sadness and regret, a sense that something has been lost since "the old days," when missions was central to the life of the church.

It is easy to become discouraged and immobilized by looking backward, by concentrating all our efforts in recreating the past. But the fact is that the world of the 1990s is a different reality from that of fifty years ago. In today's world of international travel and high-tech communications, a few colored slides depicting life in some far off, exotic place no longer hold much appeal. Church life has, in many instances, been reduced to one hour per week—that sacred Sunday morning slot when the congregation gathers to learn and experience everything it apparently needs to know about following Christ.

And, furthermore, there are persons in our congregations today who are no longer certain what is meant by the term *missions.* For some, it smacks of colonialism, of manipulation, of imposing one's beliefs on perfectly good people who should best be left alone. For others, *missions* is a catch-all expression for "everything that the church does," from inviting a neighboring congregation over for pizza to changing the carpet in the church sanctuary. (This latter activity is justified as *missions* because "it helps visitors feel more comfortable and shows them how much we care about our church.")

The task of educating for mission in the 1990s will be a challenge of immense proportions. It is my hope that some of the articles in this issue of *Mission Focus* will help point the way. Writers here remind us:

- that the home remains a crucial starting point for teaching about God's larger purposes in the world (Rich);
- that mission education is not only the job of parents, but also of pastors (Balmer), worship committees (Harnish), and all other persons involved in congregational leadership (Schrock-Shenk);
- that overseas workers on North American assignment should continue to play an important role as cross-cultural brokers and as representatives of Christ's global family (Zehr);
- and that new and creative ways of educating for mission will need to be explored and developed to provide more hands-on experiences (Meyer) and to make North Americans more aware of local opportunities for witness in an age when missions is increasingly coming home (Hege).

—James Krabill, Guest Editor

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MISSION FOCUS

Churches, Changes, and Mission in Eastern Europe

N. GERALD SHENK

The collapse of communism following 1989 and the pace of integration in Europe (target: 1992) set the parameters for recent reflection on the relationship between Christian mission and ideologies in Europe, with special attention to regional dynamics in Eastern Europe. This article grows out of personal reflection on issues raised during a November 1990 session of the Council of International Ministries, in which personnel from numerous Mennonite Church agencies relating to Europe pondered these questions with colleagues and invited guests.

We often regard ideologies as something alien, used by other people to justify their opposition to us and our cherished values. Perhaps in those encounters we also begin to discern the shape of our own ideological commitments.

At their best, ideologies may be regarded as useful interpretive frameworks in which we explain the realities we encounter. These structures for reality often take on the semblance of reality themselves, and their realism is only rarely put to the test. Massive shifts in Eastern Europe's societal and political affairs offer just such an opportunity for all who support Christian missions in the region to submit our commitments to a reality check.

It is an act of compassion simply to realize the extent to which millions of people in Eastern Europe have had their canopy of overarching explanations abruptly removed. Whether they agreed with the Marxist worldviews or not, their cosmology has been disrupted. Powers have shifted, people are at risk, and for whole societies this is a period of great jeopardy. Current spiritual guests reflect the same pattern, as whole generations have to question whether their efforts have been in vain, whether any certainty or security can be provided to those who follow.

Our explicit primary concern is with the churches in Eastern Europe, as we seek guidance for our own Western participation in their rapidly changing realities. In the process we need to reconsider the direction and strength of our previous involvements and how we may respond in cooperation with partners identified in Eastern Europe. Along the way, our own ideological presuppositions are also ripe for critical review.

With his wife, Sara Wenger Shenk, the author spent almost nine years in Yugoslavia with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee. Gerald currently teaches at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and continues teaching one month each year at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Slovenia. Walter Sawatsky and Gerald collaborated in coordinating the Council of International Ministries sessions on ideology and mission in Eastern Europe in November 1990. This article is a summary of that discussion.

Is the Cold War finally over?

One expert on Soviet affairs declared in 1966 "that the language and ideas of the Cold War are no longer adequate as a guide to international politics today" (Shulman, 1966:1). A quarter-century later, we may still ask in dismay when that colossal struggle will really come to an end. Its tentacles reach deep into our individual consciousness, and its impact on foreign policies was the most prominent consideration for decades. Like many other baby boomers, I am a child of the Cold War. My outlook bears the imprint of those fears and anxieties drummed into our sense of personal and national security (Shenk 1984:105-120). We may well find that the stamp of pervasive hostility in international relations under constant threat of mass destruction will never be entirely erased. The world is still a precarious project, even though blame for perceived causes of our vulnerabilities may shift targets.

Nevertheless, recent hopeful reports suggest that famines in the two-thirds world may soon be overcome, once local conflicts are not fueled by the overarching East/West battle. And in the current political climate, instead of being regarded as political suicide, proposals for nuclear disarmament are actually presented and received as strokes of political genius at the highest levels.

Perhaps we will see a clear sign of the Cold War's demise when the extensive literature on peacemaking has to be rewritten because its two chief concerns have become too obvious to everyone: namely, that nuclear weapons are an unacceptable threat to humankind and that Russians are not!

Another hopeful sign may come as Christians who carry critical concerns for social justice find the freedom once more to acknowledge an intellectual debt to both strengths and weaknesses evident in the Marxists' political experimentation with those ideals. And again, maybe the Cold War will truly be ended when people acquainted with Eastern Europe before 1989 are no longer called upon to explain its subsequent developments.

As these lines are written, the United States and the Soviet Union have just announced unilateral measures to remove long-range bombers and missiles from the constant state of hair-trigger alert. "Standing down" from this perpetual readiness for doomsday, reporters learned from

Air Force personnel who had maintained it ever since 1957, felt like the "real end of the Cold War," more so than did the fall of the Berlin Wall almost two years earlier.

Important dimensions of change for churches in Eastern Europe

Many observers and participants are preoccupied with changes at the level of individual religious freedoms and their corporate expression in new program possibilities for organized religious groups. Freedom and immense new opportunities for Christian witness are the watchwords of the day in Eastern Europe. Now that the doors are wide open for substantial contributions of almost any sort, many foreign Christian organizations have recently gotten into the action, promoting favorite projects in Eastern Europe with a genuine sense of urgency.

Enthusiasm is illustrated well in a June 1991 letter from Campus Crusade's Bill Bright, invited by the Russian Republic's education ministry to provide training, Bibles, and videos for "thousands of teachers" to offer courses on Christianity to their students in "hundreds of schools" across the land.

Direct-mail appeals for millions of dollars reach deep into the hearts and pockets of responsive Christians. Each project has its own allure. How can we assess their relative merits? Some of the organizations have a proven track record and lengthy involvements with local churches; others should be scrutinized for accountability in their hastily arranged connections.

We should recognize that the tremendous political changes in Eastern Europe vary greatly from one country to the next. In each case, Christian churches now face the possibility of earning a voice in shaping the emerging social order. Foreign assistance should enhance their credibility in that process, demonstrating good will and genuine care for the well-being of individuals and communities. Some local church leaders, bolstered by foreign support, appear to be entering the rough and tumble of the political fray. Our support should be directed toward efforts that build up the body of Christ and "equip the saints for ministry"; long-term cultivation of leadership resources for the churches should be a primary goal.

One part of this contribution should include insights we may share on how to evaluate the impact of other groups, especially cultic or non-Christian ventures, within the framework of civil society. Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church, for example, are quite active in the Soviet Union, and audiences have reportedly been unable to distinguish their message from other foreign Christian efforts. Responsible civil behavior includes tolerance and positive advocacy of others' rights to free expression, not just our own. At the same time, we should attempt to equip Christian leaders with careful criteria for spiritual discernment.

Important continuities we should acknowledge

Western agencies must avoid even the impression that we start from scratch in efforts to encourage the Christian witness in these European lands. We do not *bring* the gospel; previous regimes' restrictions did not succeed in erasing cultural resources which still reflect centuries of encounter with Christian values and traditions. There is a spiritual legacy which needs to be recovered, rather than entirely imported from abroad.

Another kind of continuity with the recent past will turn up in surprising ways if we fail to acknowledge the extent of Marxist success in defining issues of justice, equality, and social rights despite the massive failures in their actual implementation over the course of this century. We will encounter visceral responses to perceived injustices as we work among people trained in Marxist schools, reared on media adhering to that vision.

As for the churches themselves, the advent of huge new opportunities for witness has not meant automatic growth for the small Protestant groups spread throughout the region. Even as the numbers do increase, a minority mentality persists, preserving an often sectarian approach. The legacy of isolation and withdrawal, of mutual suspicions and competition for a tiny market share, will be difficult to overcome. Foreign assistance should be directed toward those who display willingness to cooperate

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with others in common Christian commitment. The previous mistrust of ecumenical ties often reflected an accurate assessment of the extent to which the communist regimes sought to manipulate the churches through those associations, but this part of the legacy must be overcome.

At the same time, we note with gratitude the depth of commitment preserved during hard times by many faithful witnesses. Costly discipleship and a Christian counterculture have been forged through much suffering and courage.

During decades of discrimination against active believers, access to higher education was often limited. Small Protestant groups in numerous ethnic cultures across Eastern Europe have few resources for use of media to produce Christian literature, music, and other artistic faith expressions in original, indigenous modes. These are areas where foreign cooperation for training and exchange programs may provide crucial long-term benefits. Simple transfer and translation of materials from elsewhere are not a long-term solution. Cadres for Christian social services are also in short supply in the face of massive need and systemic breakdown, but a large influx of foreign Christian workers is not itself a solution.

Ease of access and new openness to foreign styles should not mislead us on this point. Cultural resources, language, and local history are even more important than before in the region, as local and indigenous concerns—long repressed under Marxist internationalism—take priority in the euphoria of particularity. Guests and visitors must learn the appropriate respect for these sensitive concerns and show a willingness to invest in local language and culture.

One further continuity will not disappear quickly: hardship and suffering go on in the new social order. Persons devoted to the cause of Christ will continue to face tough choices in their relationship to local communities and national agenda. Some Christians may again face discrimination; a backlash against their sudden social privilege and prominence is distinctly possible. Economic dislocation and massive social disruption will have many new victims, and ordinary Christians will surely be among them. Our compassion and solidarity will be needed for a long while to come.

Humility and our own limitations

After the thrill of seeing restrictions lifted in Eastern Europe and a brief euphoria over the array of new opportunities for witness, we come back down to our own realities once more. Splendid program possibilities have never been enough by themselves to pry the support from our pockets. Visions rarely survive at a level larger than the people are willing to invest in them.

Our people exhibit some of the "compassion fatigue" afflicting charitable enterprises in general. It is hard to keep on caring deeply for victims of tragedies far away, even when the news networks bring them into our awareness with vivid imagery each day.

For decades our politicians postured at Checkpoint Charlie by Berlin's Wall, taunting the East with calls to "let your people go." Now it is the West erecting barriers to rampant immigration, wishing to limit the flow of would-be refugees. Even Hungary, whose wire-cutters actually began dismantling the barbed wire of the Iron Curtain (May 1989), has announced that 45,000 persons (mostly Romanians) have been denied admission at their borders for having insufficient funds.

Perhaps in a similar fashion, we have professed a desire to be helpful to the churches struggling in the East, only to discover when former barriers go down that we do not have the limitless resources to match the new needs and opportunities. Are the new barriers on our side now?

Some observers are asking whether the churches of the East are well served by the current steady stream of visiting preachers from the West. Pastors in large congregations along the main paths have been overwhelmed, hosting the curious and the concerned alike. Some have graciously turned over their pulpits to visitors so often that congregations go weeks or months without hearing from their own pastors.

When life is hard and visits are easy, local Christians may well ask why foreign brothers and sisters appear reluctant to spend longer amounts of time sharing the actual conditions of life and witness there today. Networks and fax connections are fine, but deeper understanding depends on an authentic engagement with local realities in all their stubborn particularity. Even though we do not resonate with it nor agree in principle to its self-absorbed demands, the rising tide of nationalist sentiments in Eastern Europe requires that we take local conditions very seriously.

And here we may detect our own limitations in twinges of distress over great economic disparities between our own conditions and those of people we wish to be helping. Wouldn't the Marxists have called it "false consciousness" or bad faith to deny that such inequities constitute a barrier to full fellowship in faith?

Another irreverent question troubles me when I contemplate our temptation to see the collapse of communism as somehow a triumph for "our side." While it is true that Christians of the East and the West did have a part in the patient preparation leading the long, slow march toward freedom, I think it would be an act of genuine humility to admit that we haven't solved all our own social ills with freedoms of the sort enjoyed in the West. Does our enthusiasm for current developments in the East in part betray a hope that a fresh start for Christian witness "over there" might result in better solutions than we have achieved in our stalemate with secularism here in the West?

A bit of evidence may be found in that same fundraising letter from Bill Bright cited earlier: "It's amazing to think that although we are barred from sharing the gospel and presenting the *Jesus* film in the schools of America, we have complete freedom to do just that in Russian schools!" What irony! Even in its demise, socialism turns out to have been good for Christian witness, at least as much as the devastating forest fire that clears a safe space for new growth.

Akin to crusades in many different ages, Bright's struggle reveals a clearly ideological dimension. It is not fair to single him out for special treatment here; Bright merely represents a general lament in the reluctant counterculture of Christianity in the West. If a spirit of triumphalism carries this crusade to the East, taking advantage of the collapse of a great ideological rival, its successes will surely be short-lived. Without solid, patient, constructive engagement with the spiritual legacy of local cultures, its techniques and gadgets will end up on a heap, refused even at the recycling center. Without the intensity of relationships at the congregational level, its heroic exploits will amount to little more than limo service between the airport and the luxury hotel in town.

Humility will direct us toward the admission that our

own struggles have not been completely won, that our resources for helping others are limited by the shallowness of our own commitments, and that our predilection for quick fixes will probably turn our attention elsewhere long before the current crises in Eastern Europe are successfully resolved. Perhaps most damaging would be the recognition that we are not doing well ourselves with the very freedoms we wished for others; faith is a fragile flower, easily trampled by the desires kept untamed in our consumer society.

Faith tested by freedom

Persons who engage in mission and partnership with Christians of Eastern Europe should embrace the new freedoms and simultaneously acknowledge the limitations on both sides of these encounters. Some concerns are critical and urgent: relief and recovery from the economic and ecological disasters of the region should be given full support. In the longer term, the vitality of local congregations should receive priority, so that all other efforts are bent toward strategic development of the churches' human resources for Christian witness and responsibility in their own societies.

These efforts should include Christian family counseling, education, and economic development, as well as nurture for mature Christian leadership and spiritual discernment.

Mennonites and all others who understand the believers church critique of establishment Christendom should be diligent in clarifying our commitments to religious freedom in the context of civil society. This may help to protect us from a short-lived triumphalism or sheer opportunist response to the misfortunes of others. Coercion has no place in the concerns of faith.

The "despair that is Yugoslavia" (Mojze, 1991:45-49) should serve warning to us all that majority traditional religious groups combined with ethnic or national identity prove woefully ineffective in limiting the regional mistrust, hatred, and violence which had so long been repressed under Marxist domination. Most of the freedoms just now reaching other lands in the region have in fact been available to the churches and other groups in Yugoslavia for more than two decades (except for political pluralism); the results have not been encouraging. Authentic biblical witness in the power of the gospel must include a clear call to the peace of Christ.

Let us beware of any attempt to dilute the strength of this message. Anything less than the gospel will not be good news in Eastern Europe today. And let us freely admit that our interest in this partnership includes a desire for our own spiritual renewal.

I reiterate the conviction that renewal and the gospel are not ours to *bring* to Eastern Europe, but to *discover* and *recover* there in partnership with many faithful witnesses, both new and old. May this joy be the reward for our volunteers who are ready to take up the lengthy task of reconstructing a Christian heritage from the relics, remnants, and memories down through recent generations there.

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The Blessing of Abraham's Children:
A Theology of Service

GERALD W. SCHLABACH

In January 1986, Samuel Escobar, an evangelical leader from South America, was guest speaker at the annual meeting of Mennonite Central Committee, the main North American Mennonite agency for relief, development, and global education. After listening to a lengthy discussion of how MCC workers witness to their faith and whether MCC should make church planting an explicit part of its program, Escobar expressed surprise. After all, he said, observers from other churches often looked to Mennonites as a model of "integrating word and deed."

The Mennonite record of committing human and financial resources to various forms of "service" draws envy from many church administrators in both evangelical and ecumenical circles. Yet our theology of service is not always in step with our engagement in the world's situations of poverty, crisis, war, and human need.

Of course, acting on faith is more important than theorizing about acting, if we must choose. Though the priest and Levite could probably expound in great detail on proper orthodox theology, it was the despised, heretical Samaritan who became Jesus' model of love when he acted neighborly by stopping to aid the victim on the Jericho road. Biblically, however, we know God and know God's will best through the ongoing, fruitful interaction between reflection and action—what Latin American theologians call *praxis*.

In this century Mennonites have served in increasingly sophisticated ways. Our Anabaptist forebears thought it scandalous that the wealthy, established churches of their day did not even provide for their own poor, much less show a sense of Christian obligation to aid other hungry and naked people. Since their day, a commitment to mutual aid within the Mennonite community has led naturally and logically to efforts on behalf of the needy whatever their race or creed. Mennonite churches have created a series of helping institutions—alternatives to military service, voluntary service at home and abroad, large-scale relief, grassroots development projects in the two-thirds world, activism and lobbying on behalf of social justice, and more. Desire for alternative service in the face

Gerald W. Schlabach has served with Mennonite Central Committee in Nicaragua and Honduras, as well as at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania. Currently living in South Bend, Indiana, he is in a doctoral program in theology and ethics at the University of Notre Dame.

of military conscription has regularly been a catalyst in the process, but the urge runs deeper. An apparent preference of newly urbanized Mennonites for service professions suggests a commitment lasting after times of war and beyond the age of both conscription and youthful idealism.

Facing a new world

A first glance suggests that Mennonite theological reflection has kept pace with Mennonite action for service. Mennonites once cited obligations "first to the household of faith," and later sought to provide the "cup of cold water in my name" to the hungry, thirsty, naked, and stranger (Gal. 6:10; Matt. 10:42, 25:31ff.). But now many Mennonites are service professionals educated to analyze human need according to interlocking systems of cause and effect, supply and demand, justice and exploitation. Or, as overseas volunteers, they have experienced first hand that "doing good" may not always be so simple. Having acquired more complex worldviews, some of these Mennonites in turn cite the biblical themes of shalom, justice, and even liberation.

Yet there are signs that Mennonite theology of service and social responsibility have not kept pace with Mennonite programs. The continuing struggle over how to integrate word and deed is only the first of various areas where we lack churchwide consensus. If we are to sustain our commitment to service, we face a pastoral challenge.

In 1959 J. D. Graber, the Mennonite Board of Missions executive who did more than anyone else to bring his church's witness and service into the contemporary, post-colonial age, wrote: "The idea that every young man (or woman) owes his church one or more years of service on a voluntary, non-remunerative basis is a dynamic idea that is fast on the way to being universally accepted and practiced" (Graber, 1960:65). Would that we could be so optimistic a generation later! MCC is sustaining its record number of personnel (over 1000 in 53 countries) through multiple terms of service, not a record number of applications. Other voluntary service programs run by Mennonite denominations have scaled back.

One way in which MCC and other voluntary service agencies call on Mennonites to give their time, talents, and financial support is to appeal to the example of the good Samaritan or Jesus' words about a cup of cold water. We need Samaritan-like reflexes for responding to human need. Otherwise our service institutions may grow more sophisticated but lose their soul. Yet taken alone, such biblical motifs prompt individualistic images of service. Samaritan-like motivations may backfire when volunteers begin to wonder whether their efforts amount to more than a drop in the bucket, and when, after all our "sacrifices," we are still so much wealthier than our hosts. In the face of massive poverty, world hunger, and entrenched systems of injustice, guilt and obligation sometimes drive the would-be disciple to despair, not service. Individual idealism alone is not sustainable, and service done out of guilt even less so.

Moreover, service is more than volunteering. If volunteers return to North American or European culture hoping to maintain a servant lifestyle, they will soon sense a need for a supportive community of service. One apparent solution is to choose a lifelong service profession or to become involved in special interest groups. But often a new peer community, whether a professional guild or a solidarity group, provides the concerned Christian with counsel, cues, and nurture. Thus it effectively substitutes as "church."

On the other hand, the person who turns to the faith community for support and outlets for service will quickly find that many brothers and sisters in the church are afraid of the biblical themes of justice and liberation. The result is that concern for worldwide human need effectively remains an individual opinion—an atomized response to global problems.

Finding a new theology

To keep pace with our service and engagement in the world, we need more than a theology of individual obedience and volunteerism. We need to create—in life, not just on paper—a theology that accounts for the complexity of structural injustice. Yet we must do so without overwhelming the spirituality, the piety, and the personal motivation that we need to sustain struggle and work.

We must locate service within salvation history. Looking back, we must remind ourselves through story and liturgy, that the source of our service is God's saving love. Looking forward, we must dream God's dream of new heavens and a new earth where justice reigns. And to bring past and future into our present, we must incarnate both in servanthood communities.

We might find help in a new paradigm—a model of who we are to be in the world, one that functions as our tradition once did to make sense of our experience as a people, yet one that is able to solve new problems our tradition never faced. Actually the paradigm we need is the oldest one of all, the model of the Abrahamic minority.

Historian Thomas S. Kuhn has described how science painfully adopts new "paradigms," or ways of looking, to explain natural phenomena. He noted that just before a "paradigm-shift" takes place, scientists increasingly find themselves tinkering, qualifying, and noting exceptions to the old theories (Kuhn, 1970). Mennonites too have been struggling to account for new data. Two generations ago theologians Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr told Mennonites their pacifism and social posture was biblical but not socially responsible. Ever since, Mennonites have had to answer the charge that service, however noteworthy, was inadequate to meet the challenges facing humanity (Reinhold Niebuhr, 1940:1-32; Richard Niebuhr, 1951:45-82). Meanwhile, our own service efforts were taking us to the limits of charity, and social trends such as urbanization have presented Mennonite social ethics with new problems. As a result, Mennonite theologians and social activists today bear some resemblance to astronomers in the century prior to Copernicus, who bravely multiplied mathematical formulas and charts to account for all the erratic movements in the stars, yet keep the earth in the center of the universe.

One kingdom or two?

The Mennonite universe once divided neatly into two kingdoms. To be sure, these were not Augustine's two cities nor Luther's two realms—dualities of material and spiritual, or visible and invisible realms. No, Mennonite two-kingdom theology has always expected God's kingdom to manifest itself concretely in the lives of Christ's disciples, here and now. At its best this theology has helped us present a coherent, relevant message of shalom to the kingdom of this world. It has done so by grounding our witness in a distinct community that is a living

expression of the social reality of the gospel. Two-kingdom theology has helped us keep means and ends in order. For if we believe God to be working indiscriminately in the worldly kingdoms rather than in Christ's own church, we are more likely to use power vested in the present system for kingdom ends.

Two-kingdom theology also made sense of our sociology, a rural sociology of relative separation from mainstream culture. But that is now one of its problems; as sociological distinctions erode, some of theology's rationale does too. A more serious problem is that the two-kingdom outlook has often tempted Mennonites to ignore the world while they concentrated on building their own churches and communities. And so, paradoxically, it has too often been at odds with the very gospel of shalom that the redeemed community is to incarnate and project. Shalom, after all, is God's all-inclusive, universal hope for a redeemed, restored, reintegrated creation. Two-kingdom theology is an inherently rigid model; it tempts us to believe that we can state once and for all that God is working here and not there with some people in and others out.

Two-kingdom theology may be an accurate, though partial, description of what is: only part of the creation acknowledges its Lord. Yet the two kingdoms are the problem, not the solution. Of course, we do need an accurate description of the problem. But the promise for which we hope is one kingdom.

Is the alternative then some form of one-kingdom theology? Christians have done much damage in the name of cosmological dualism—albeit usually of the Augustinian, metaphysical kind. The priority of "saving the soul" has justified neglect for material human needs—or even outright destruction of the body and of the environment. In reaction, many theologians today call for the elimination of all dualism.[1] One-kingdom theology is biblical when it reminds the church that no part of creation is beyond the church's concern. It thereby removes the easiest, lamest, and most common excuse for passing human need on the road because "that is not the business of religion."

The problem with one-kingdom theology is that it tends to underestimate the need for conversion, a radical change to Jesus' ways. The kingdom toward which we work tends to be merely a reformed version of the present systems of power. One-kingdom theology also tends to underestimate the need for covenanted community. The entire social order is the sphere of activity, and so no special allegiances, commitments, or networks of support seem necessary. But if a project for social change is original enough to be worth the bother, those working for change need a living model of what that change would mean.

Whether or not they use the terms, Mennonite thinkers today are trying to sort out whether our theology should be that of one or of two kingdoms. Both views have biblical roots. But the result is a pre-Copernican complex that hardly represents consensus across the faith community. Instead of piecing together elements of both theologies, we need to transcend them. Both fall short because both are rigid, spatial images—flat maps rather than living travelogues, static cosmologies, not living chronologies. Maps freeze boundaries. Travelogues bring peoples to life, bring them together, and invite further journeys.

The Abrahamic model brings paradox

The major biblical image is not a cosmological construct at all but a story. It is a story that has been unfolding ever since God called Abraham out of Ur and promised to bless him so that he might be a blessing to all nations. Realistically, some have yet to acknowledge the source of that blessing which falls on just and unjust alike, but the invitation is open. Meanwhile, the children of Abraham, if faithful to their calling, show God's indiscriminate love and concern for all creation through service to all peoples. And when they fall?

Ah, but that is the biblical drama! The temptation to hoard God's blessing constantly defined the struggle of Old Testament Israel. It was the temptation to celebrate identity in Abraham, liberation at Exodus, and a land flowing with milk and honey—while forgetting to welcome the stranger, free the slaves, and remember the oppressed, widow, and orphan. The more abjectly the people failed, the more the prophets agonized over the meaning of Israel's existence. Finally Isaiah and his disciples saw that the only way forward was, in effect, the way back to the call of Abraham. If the people of God had failed to be a servant people-for-other-peoples, another Servant of Yahweh would come to live and die supremely for others. Yet even as Jesus Christ fulfilled the messianic vision of Isaiah, he called his disciples to form a new servant community—a new people-for-other-peoples sent into all the world. They struggled with how to be an inclusive community of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, and yet not dissipate their distinct identity. And so do we. Yet, like the Hebrews and the early Christians, we lose our very distinctiveness when we live merely to preserve our own self-interests.

This paradox of becoming a new community, yet moving beyond that community's self-preservation, is what gives the Abrahamic community its creativity—and the Abrahamic paradigm its power. Our service is not just that of a special-interest group or philanthropic agency. We are a community with a distinct story to nurture, retell, and live. We have pastoral and liturgical obligations to one another. We are accountable to a sacred tradition. We should expect to live as nonconformists within mainstream culture. Far from producing an ingrown community, however, this story allows us no complacency. It will push us out again and again, beyond the boundaries of our community, toward other peoples and other communities—even though their values, their cries for justice, and their religions pose challenges for the very community that sent us. Yet if those at the frontier remember that it was the community and its story that nurtured and sent them there, they will bring these questions back with reverence. And so, a continuing dialectic. Our communities will change, but as Abrahamic communities they will continually find life by dying for others.[2]

The Abrahamic model bring faithfulness

Children of Abraham ... a blessing to the peoples ... a creative minority living for the whole. Our own stories should stand within the Abrahamic story of salvation history. Locating them there can help us be more faithful. Doing so invites sustenance from our past, guidance from God's future, and hope for our present.

First of all, obligation is a poor motivator. That is why the basis of living justly in both Old and New Testament is always God's living, liberating acts, to which we respond by acting lovingly. In what may be the oldest liturgy in the Bible, the Hebrews confessed that "a wandering Aramean was my father.... the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...." In response they brought a tithe for "the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,

that they may eat" (Deut. 26:5-13). We will only sustain service as we remember, through worship and devotion, that we too were in bondage until God reached out to us.

Secondly, toward what does our service work? The eschatological hope of the Abrahamic story is nothing less than the new heavens and new earth of Isaiah, Micah, and St. John on the island of Patmos. In God's new order, all nations find blessing as they go up to the mountain of Yahweh "that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths." The nations thus blessed turn weapons into farm implements; they redistribute resources so that every family may produce sufficiently and without fear of repression (Isa. 65:17-25; Mic. 4:1-4; Rev. 21:1ff., 22:1-2). Serving with this vision, we can embrace the complex work of justice without being overwhelmed by it. For ultimately, the change we seek is God's gift.

The Abrahamic model brings hope

Finally, the model of Abrahamic communities of service may offer hope for many of our most pertinent problems.

First, we may be less likely to confuse specific service institutions with service itself. Alternate service, voluntary service, and service professions become tools in the hands of a servanthood community. They are not its substitutes, nor ways the church entertains its most adventurous, youthful members.

Second, service will keep the church's care for itself from becoming neurotic and self-absorbed. Mutual aid, pastoral nurture, and common worship find their fulfillment as they enable Christians to perform, rather than distract them from, outward-looking tasks. Building community is more important than ever, yet we will not dare to lose our perspective—the community loses its reason for being unless it lives for other communities.

And third, we may finally gain clarity on the relationship between word and deed—holding them together in creative tension without either divorcing them or allowing one to swallow up the other. To proclaim a word that calls people into the Abrahamic community of Jesus' followers is the most crucial, most potent deed we can do! Yet because this word creates a community-for-other-communities, it dare not be triumphalistic or disrespectful. As Dom Hélder Câmara, the former archbishop of Recife, Brazil, said: "The Spirit of God breathes life into the Abrahamic minorities that already exist in the womb of all races, all religions, all countries, and all human groups. Whoever hopes against hope, like Abraham, and decides to work, even sacrifice for a more just and humane world, belongs to these Abrahamic minorities" (de Renedo, 1976:189). Whether the church goes out in mission or in service, it goes to meet the Christ who is already at work, perhaps namelessly, in the culture, the social fabric, even the religion, of other peoples. The blessing of Abraham's children never needs to "destroy this village in order to save it."

Realistically, our churches are a long way from this Abrahamic servanthood way of being God's people in the world. Many, perhaps all of us, shrink back from the call of Abraham; for in spite of the promise of blessing, the church we know seems old and its womb sterile. Yet the path Abraham walked offers a way, not only to serve the world, but also to renew the church. If the church is to become more of a creative, serving, Abrahamic community in the world, let us be a creative, serving, Abrahamic minority in the church. Let us begin simply, and simply begin.

Notes

1. See, for example, Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 69-72. It would be wrong to assume, however, that radical, liberal, or liberation theologies provide the only examples of "one-kingdom theology." One-kingdom theology can also justify the status quo—even or especially a fascist status quo—by granting it divine legitimacy as the result of God's overall working in history.

2. Two people have influenced my thought on "Abrahamic community"—David A. Shank, lifelong missionary in Belgium and in Cote d'Ivoire, and Dom Hélder Câmara, former Roman Catholic archbishop in Recife, Brazil. See Shank, "The Shape of Mission Strategy," in *Mission Focus: Current Issues*, edited by Wilbert R. Shenk, pp. 118-128; and Câmara, in *Hélder Câmara: Proclamas a la Juventud* [Hélder Câmara: Proclamations to Youth edited by Benedicto Tapia de Renedo, pp. 183-204.

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Theological Education by Extension:
One Missionary's Experience

MATHEW SWORA

"Every guinea hen sees the back of another guinea hen's head," says a Bambara proverb from Mali, meaning that no one should be without leadership. That is characteristically true of social life in most of sub-Saharan Africa.

The growth of the church in Africa is like that of a chicken swelling to become the size of an elephant—all of the chicken, that is, except for the bones. The bones represent the church's leadership. A crisis of leadership besets the African church, particularly mission-related churches. This crisis may stem from the church's relative youth, but it is compounded by the continent's social upheaval and poverty. While young churches and new Christians need pastoral leadership most acutely, poverty and the dearth of education suited to the rest of the world's theological resources make meeting this need more difficult.

While foreign church workers can help the African churches in some ways, locally grown leadership is needed. Foreign missionaries may function as midwives who attend the birth of the African church, but the church needs wet-nurses and guardians of its own clan to nourish and guide its growth. Current African church leaders may be responsible for as many as six congregations over a wide geographical area, as well as needing to provide their own material support. But there are resources for increasing this leadership base.

Soon after my wife and I arrived in Orodara, in the province of Kenedougou in Burkina Faso, I was exorcised of any notion that I could be the pastor of that city's church and of the two immigrant churches in the surrounding region. I knew I was ignorant of the realities which new Burkinabé Christians had to face. My own job description was general enough to allow for this interpretation, but getting out of that role was extremely difficult. In spite of the crying need for leadership of some kind, my wife and I concentrated on language acquisition and acculturation, a choice we did not regret. And some leadership emerged from within the congregation to fill the gaps and even explore new options for mission.

The need for trained leadership was most critical in the outlying churches with which we were to work. I had heard of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) as one way of developing pastors and lay leaders on site and among the membership, but I became convinced of its potential on a trip to northern Ghana where we visited some SIM missionaries. I was impressed with the fact that the missionary brought Bible training to the church members, rather than expecting them to come in to distant urban centers for teaching. I was also impressed with the "down-to-earth-ness" and applicability of the teaching material. The fact that it was in a colonial language (English) struck me as a minor but unavoidable difficulty.

Within a year of that visit to Ghana, I was ready to put TEE to use in Burkina Faso. Materials in the trade language (Jula) had already been developed by another mission, sparing me the work and time which would have gone into creating or searching for locally appropriate materials. This shows the potential which TEE holds for ecumenical cooperation. Another missionary on our team had already started using these materials with one church and had some timely advice for me. The mission which had developed the materials planned to hold a country-wide in-service on their proper use. But that wouldn't come until four months into the dry season and two months after the harvest. For hardworking farmers, such education should begin in enough time to complete a twelve-week study program before the rains and planting begin again. I found later that, due to my own needs and to the nature of rural village life, a twelve-week program would require at least twenty weeks to complete.

So, I began working with TEE students one month before my proper TEE orientation rather than waiting for the rainy season plus a furlough before doing anything. Traveling in the bush during a West African rainy season is nearly out of the question. But getting to the churches was to prove the least of the complications—for that a moped sufficed except for the time a cable broke and the moped would only accelerate!

The joint committee of the local churches and the mission decided on two issues relating to TEE: that the local churches would choose which members would take advantage of my offer to provide TEE classes, and that students would pay one-third of the cost of the books with the committee paying the other two-thirds. In most cases paying for even one-third of the book cost came only with difficulty and delay. Only in one church did a woman choose or find herself allowed to participate, and even though she paid for the book, she never attended the classes or handed in any work. I suspect she was either too busy with household chores or was too shy to be the one woman amid a group of men.

Someone in the mission which had created the TEE materials advised us to bypass the first volume in the study series, an Old Testament survey, and begin with the second, a New Testament book. Though I had my reservations about such advice, I took it. When I later did the Old Testament unit with a group in our town, I came to wish I had not heeded that advice. Not only did the first volume give a good overview of the Bible in general, but we were all amazed at the commonalities between Old Testament culture and experience and those of contemporary and traditional Africa. Practices and concerns relating to sacrifices, levirate marriage, sorcery and divination, idolatry, purity regulations, and the community's care of widows and the powerless are common to the Old Testament and traditional West Africa.

As though it wasn't evident otherwise, TEE quickly separated those who had had experience with Western formal education from those who had none, even if both groups were literate in the trade language. Simply writing an answer in an answer space, or recognizing the topic sentence in a paragraph, are skills learned in an environment and in a way still foreign and artificial in most of Africa. Suddenly, in the world of paper and pencils, older

Mathew Swora served two years in Burkino Faso, jointly appointed by the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and by Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church. After graduating from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Mathew now serves half-time as church planter and administrator for the inter-Mennonite Detroit Project and half-time as homemaker.

and wiser men could be outdone by their sons and nephews.

My previous training in elementary education was potentially both a handicap and a help. If I insisted on education as I had come to know it, I ran the risk of alienating and humiliating the natural leaders of these new churches and of favoring young men with less wisdom. Westernization has produced enough new tensions between these two groups in Africa, as elsewhere, that I did not wish to add more. Fortunately, since the continual changes in the world of Western pedagogy had left me with no set philosophy of education, but rather with an openness towards many learning styles, I began to see the need for an inclusive style of group learning which would later emerge as a spin-off of the village palaver. Traditionally village business is discussed for as long as it takes to reach consensus, and the process of group discernment is at least as important as the product. This is the vision which later emerged, not necessarily the description of my first and only year of leading TEE.

I soon stopped looking over workbooks to see if all the work was done. That was demeaning. By carefully questioning the group I could get an idea who understood the reading and who did not, and whether any lack of understanding resulted from laziness or, more likely, from unfamiliarity with the format. My job as TEE leader gradually became one of integrator: that is, I aimed for the integration of the written material with African culture and experience. Sometimes I could point to proverbs, riddles, and stories from their own world which related to or cast light on the lesson material. More often, due to my unfamiliarity with local affairs, I asked questions about African culture or their experience in search of those life-giving connections between text and context. These questions often did as much to educate me as to enlighten the students.

Certain technical and practical things could alleviate the strangeness of it all. For those who couldn't write their answers, I allowed them simply to circle the answer in the text. If they showed interest, I provided printed materials for teaching themselves handwriting at their own pace. They would then show me their work during my visits and a few made good progress.

The physical setup of the sessions was important, too. Education is a physical and social activity, not only an intellectual one, and the way we learn is as important as what we learn, especially when we're dealing with a gospel of love. Burkina Faso is what is sometimes called "face-to-face" society, meaning every participant in a group event needs to be equally available to other participants. Thus we sat in a close circle. Meetings began with song and prayer plus a short devotional and closed with discussion of concerns which required prayer and reflection. We closed by praying together about these issues. Then a time of informal fellowship and "shooting the breeze" preceded a meal. In some cases the extent of the business required that I spend the night. I grew to look forward to overnighters because of the singing and storytelling which occurred late into the evening. TEE educated me to the nature of village life when sessions included trips to new fields, visits to the chief, and to new or prospective believers in joint ministry.

One night in particular stands out in my memory. It has been said that the traditional African's understanding of time is less linear and more cyclical than the Western view. The biblical view of history, namely, that it is moving toward an end in keeping with the sovereign will of God, would allegedly be incomprehensible to many Africans. Yet I perceived that many Burkinabé, Christian or otherwise, had no trouble planning and investing labor, land, or money for the future in ways we'd typically call "entrepreneurial." On this one night I was asked why it was that whites were Christian and Africans were pagan or Muslim. After showing that neither observation was universally true—I mentioned for instance the 1,600-year-old Coptic Church in Ethiopia—our discussion touched on the histories of Islam and Christianity. I estimated the number of generations between ourselves and the time of Jesus and the apostles at around one thousand (five per century). The age of the Christian faith relative to Islam, often a problem for Christian Westerners awaiting Christ's return, had a markedly different effect on my friends. They seemed positively impressed by the age of the Christian movement, as though its age proved its reliability. Regarding the future, I found it wise to stress that God alone knows the day when all things shall be made new. In light of current ecological and social crises, we would also do well to consider that God will deal with us according to the justice or injustice we will have meted out on his earth to future generations.

If any idea sums up the nature of leadership training in this context to me, it is that of "giving permission." A teacher cannot be content simply to impart knowledge from his or her head into someone else's, especially when that knowledge amounts to relational truth. Teacher and students are partners in a joint learning exercise, especially when some learners are older and in many respects wiser than the teacher. By believing in the students the teacher imparts confidence, which becomes self-confidence in another area of life for the student—their most valuable lesson. The teacher "gives permission" to the students to value and trust their own experiences and insights even when the subject matter is new.

For people new to the gospel and the world church, this is no minor event. One example is, I hope, representative of the best of the whole experience. A lesson concerned with the apostle Paul's itinerant ministry concluded with a question about the value of moving elsewhere to settle among non-Christian people of another tribe in order to share the gospel with them. When I asked one group what they thought about such apostolic ministry, their response was noncommittal. This struck me as strange. As Christians, they had themselves migrated already from a drought-stricken region in order to find work and land to farm. Their faith was already making an impact in spontaneous ways on the indigenous people. Perhaps their halfhearted response was due to their own pain of having left their families and ancestral territories. Or perhaps they suspected that I, a missionary, was fishing for a compliment. So I asked, "But isn't that what you all did when you migrated here from. . . ?" Their eyes brightened with recognition, and they laughed and said, "Yes, that *is* what we did!"

I would like to believe that TEE is a method of such empowerment for students. I wanted them to see the Bible as a friendly book written by and for people facing circumstances similar to their own, that they are responsible for distilling their learnings into usable form for their congregations, and that they have what it takes to do it. I also hoped that the quality of our interaction encouraged expanded mission and ministry on the learners' parts, thus multiplying the impact of the teaching on the wider

society. Those hopes express my vision and purpose for leading TEE.

But several barriers need to be overcome which will likely hinder TEE programs for a long time to come. These are barriers of culture, gender roles, and literacy. The cultural problems are as much structural as philosophical. The nature of rural, agricultural village life doesn't lend itself well to Western formal methods of education. A peasant society may well be as complex as our own, but it is built and passed on in different ways. Relevant knowledge is mentally stored and orally transmitted. Our culture demands and attempts to create some artificially maintained measure of predictability and accountability by means such as the clock. But what does a peasant farmer do when his TEE instructor expects to arrive on Thursday at 1:00 p.m. but the first rain of the season has come Wednesday night and the fields must be prepared immediately thereafter? And what if there is no telephone by which to communicate and change plans? That peasant will likely expect the instructor to understand that plowing takes precedence and that the study session must be postponed to a later time. As TEE leader I quickly learned that it was my job to adapt, because the students' very survival depended upon their own adaptability. So at least one trip out to the bush was "fruitless" from a pedagogical point of view. The same tension arises in cases of deaths, births, marriages, and many holidays.

One way to deal with this tension is to make the teaching as event-oriented as are the lives of the rural peasants. A teacher may try coming once every five-or-six weekends to cover four-weeks' worth of material, spending a whole weekend with a group covering and integrating the material and doing other ministry and recreation together. Thus TEE may become something of a festival.

Regarding gender roles, we can either pray for a female teacher of literacy and Bible to parallel the work done by and among men, or we can pray for courageous African women of pioneering spirit to take their lonely and conspicuous place among male students. At the moment I don't know which is more likely to occur. In this beginning stage of the church in southwestern Burkina Faso, young men comprise the largest group in the church, but already the women are giving more than they are given. Their needs are considerable, too.

A smaller percentage of women than men are literate and so fewer can take advantage of TEE as most often offered anyway. One way of opening the Bible for them and for nonliterate men and children would be to bypass literacy altogether. Much of the Bible arose from within oral society and can be as meaningfully heard as read. Teaching Bible in nonliterate ways to people of an oral culture requires a major heartfelt conversion on the part of the foreign missionary, especially one with many years of formal education.

Before the end of my first term overseas I had only begun to experiment with telling Bible stories after the manner of West African oratory, complete with proverbs, illustrative fables and ideophones—characteristic sounds like that which the rabbit makes hopping through the bush—"kri-kri-kri." One could even compose and include songs in the recounting of Bible stories, as is done with many folk tales. After hearing a story and song only one or two times, many nonliterate Africans will be able to reproduce it nearly word for word. I dislike the word "nonliterate" because it defines many peoples' learning style in a negative way—i.e., only in relation to what they do not have or know, rather than in relation to what they can do or have. We must find a word which expresses and values the capacity of people to speak, hear, and memorize.

Other oral and aural media are the radio and cassette tape player. Our mission had begun lending hand-winding cassette tape players along with Bible teaching cassette tapes and the accompanying picture booklets several years before our arrival. After hearing the cassette several times, that booklet became like a miniature Bible. The pictures jogged their memories of the stories along with further reflections on their meanings and applications. In the future, cassettes with new songs, dramas, teachings on faith, health, or agriculture could be developed and circulated among the churches, another opportunity to enlist and unleash creativity within the churches.

But more basic than the mechanics of teaching is the heartfelt orientation of the teacher and students toward each other. Education as we Westerners know it limits the scope of student-to-teacher interaction to the transference of information directly related to the class's subject matter. But missionaries and pastors—indeed all Christians—share relational truth. The method and content of TEE will betray each other unless there is some degree of spiritual intimacy and openness between teacher and student, because ultimately the TEE instructor is teaching by modeling, not just by speaking. The most powerful lessons are those which exhibit consistency between ideas and lifestyle. For that to happen, some access to the teacher's inner states and experiences, however risky that may seem, must be granted. That could include sharing with students personal areas of struggle, defeat, or victory, if personally and pedagogically appropriate.

I doubt that any one missionary could do all of this alone in any setting, especially if the church continues to grow. But merely experimenting could give permission and inspiration to African Christians to put their own cultural forms and genius to work for the sake of the gospel and their church, thus expanding upon and multiplying one missionary's input. First-generation Christians may not often give themselves this permission. Sometimes they may be more negative and suspicious of their own cultural background than are many missionaries. Paulo Freire, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), writes that education will either liberate or domesticate. I hope that my minor contribution will not have hindered the release of Holy Spirit power through my Burkinabé friends and their customary forms of communication, nor that it will have enslaved them to my own ways of learning and sharing truths.

On the whole, my experiences in TEE and Bible teaching have liberated something in me, something useful, I hope, in North America as well. Some current leadership styles in this setting can likewise stifle Spirit-given creativity and initiative among the laity. Academic elitism in theological training will discourage those not similarly trained from trusting their own experiences and finding God therein. I have seen it firsthand now that Christ, in any cultural setting, has a powerful life of his own, ready to be expressed in and through any church. For the church's leaders and teachers, their job is not to control this life and power but to unleash it by removing the barriers of ignorance and unbelief. This process will include the teacher as both a model and a partner.

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Identity and Dynamics of Mission Among Oregon Mennonites

HOPE KAUFFMAN LIND

For Mennonites through much of their first century in Oregon (1876-1976), mission was an integral part of their lives. That definition of mission included evangelism, outreach, church development and growth—whatever helped link persons to Christian faith, discipleship, and service (Lind, 1990). In the earliest years, Oregon Mennonites were themselves the object of mission concerns. As they established congregations and conferences, they initiated and supported various mission efforts.

Recipients and contributors in mission

That sense of mission grew out of their self-identity, a perception developed largely from their relationships with the larger Mennonite bodies. In the latter nineteenth century, after an era of living as "the quiet in the land," Mennonites were again taking seriously the mission mandate that Jesus gave his disciples. Probably most Mennonites were unaware how much the larger Christian missionary movement influenced their perception of mission as an essential element of Christian living. The revival movement that stimulated a more expressive faith also promoted mission outreach. But distinctive Mennonite interpretations and practices—which contributed to their self-identity—often complicated their mission efforts. The questions of whether to promote nonresistance and particular applications of a nonconformed life varied from time to time and place to place. Mennonites in Oregon reflected the characteristics of their particular larger church groups.

From earliest years, Oregon Mennonites were a heterogeneous collection, no group very large in numbers, some very small. By the early twentieth century, Oregon's largest groups were: Amish Mennonite, which soon merged with the (Old) Mennonite group (OM/MC), General Conference Mennonite (GCM), and Mennonite Brethren (MB). By 1976 unaffiliated Mennonites (UM) comprised a sizable group. Heterogeneity even within groups affected their life and mission efforts.

Two themes appear in early correspondence from Oregon's Mennonites—acknowledgement of the wide differences among them, and their need for "able" ministers to help unite them (*Herald of Truth*, 1888:233). Thus, the earliest work of mission among Oregon Mennonites was directed *toward* them. Visiting ministers traveled to Oregon to strengthen the faith of the immigrant families, to preach, baptize, reinstate the backslidden, ordain ministers, and organize congregations while attempting—not always successfully—to restore peace and bring unity within and among Oregon Mennonite groups.

As early as 1880, C. B. Steiner of Ohio visited the small Swiss Mennonite community at Silverton, no doubt hoping to prevent more Mennonites from joining the Apostolic Christian Church, which Christian C. Wenger, self-identified as Oregon's first Mennonite settler, had done the year before. A *Herald of Truth* reporter trusted that others besides Steiner might "be led to see the importance and the necessity of laboring earnestly in the Master's vineyard." Steiner made several ministerial trips to Oregon before moving there in 1885 (*Herald*, 1880:146; 1884:264). Several times in the 1880s Amish Mennonite bishop Jonathan P. Smucker of Indiana visited Oregon, in 1883 being "called there by the Church" to preach, encourage, and organize "a Church." The OM Evangelizing Committee covered his travel costs in 1889 (*Herald*, 1883:264; 1889:249). In 1890 J. B. Baer, GCM missionary traveling home, organized Oregon's first GCM congregation and six years later helped organize its Pacific District Conference. Baer's preaching trips to Oregon contributed strongly to GCM church development. In the 1890s MB elder Heinrich Voth of Minnesota ministered to migratory MB families in Oregon.

By the turn of the century, Oregon Mennonites saw themselves both as contributors to and recipients of mission efforts. The GCM Pacific District Conference (PDC) started its first annual sessions in 1896 with a mission festival and took offerings for home and foreign missions. The moving forces behind the promotion of missions were at times mixed; for example, when the GCM conference met in 1903, a "mission emphasis" was seen as one "remedy" for overcoming such "hindrances" as world conditions and distances between congregations. An Oregon session of the 1905 OM Kansas-Nebraska Conference (KN)—in which Oregon Mennonites participated before their Pacific Coast Conference organized in 1906—resolved that "leading souls to Christ is the mission of every Christian." They recognized the immensity of the "western field," defined as "every city, village, hamlet, mining camp, lumberman's camp, and rural district" west of the Mississippi. All three Pacific conferences (GCM, OM, and MB) organized a committee or board to promote evangelism and mission work. An important responsibility of the GCM and MB committees was to assist and strengthen their own scattered Mennonite congregations in Oregon.[1]

Oregon's Mennonite groups worked at mission in similar ways. One by-product of their self-identity was an emphasis on many individuals, lay as well as ordained, being personally involved in local mission efforts. As they progressed into the mid-twentieth century, laity and the ordained alike used Sunday school, music, summer Bible school, literature, camping, and radio as methods of mission work. They sponsored or supported evangelistic/revivalist preachers, both in local congregations and in city or area campaigns. Three times in the 1950s, major OM evangelists brought their tent meetings to Oregon, where ecumenical followings enlarged Mennonite audiences. Oregon Mennonites worked in rescue missions and saw examples of changed lives. By 1976 several Hispanic congregations were established in Oregon with the encouragement and support of Anglos.

Differing emphases in mission

Forms of mission work by Oregon Mennonites were similar, but emphases differed. Among OMs, it was individuals or congregations, more than the conference mission board, who started mission Sunday schools or churches. Mennonite families moved to communities such

Hope Kauffman Lind is conference historian for Pacific Coast Mennonite Conference and a member of the Historical Committee for the Mennonite Church. From Eugene, Oregon, she is author of Apart and Together: Mennonites in Oregon and Neighboring States, *published in 1990.*

as Grants Pass, Logsden, and Estacada, expressly for mission outreach or to assist in a new work. In other situations, however, Mennonites already lived in or near communities where a mission work began. Generally, economic, social, and cultural factors were primary influences on the establishment of mission congregations. But the idea of mission held forth an essential purpose, and new mission work provided opportunities for energetic and dedicated members. Doubtless some workers welcomed opportunities which mission Sunday schools provided to stretch or escape traditional ways of home congregations.

By the 1950s, mission emphasis in the larger church was changing from the maternal approach that every congregation have an "outpost" to the idea that establishing fraternal congregations was more biblical. A sizable number of the outposts in Oregon became organized Mennonite congregations; several never joined the OM Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) but became independent community churches. By 1976 half of the PCC congregations began as self-conscious mission efforts by other PCC individuals or congregations.

Among Oregon's GCMs and MBs, conference evangelism/mission committees more often assisted their own scattered or small congregations, and individuals and local congregations were less inclined than the OMs to establish new Mennonite congregations. Rather, GCMs and MBs often worked with the American Sunday School Union or a similar group. Two exceptions were the Sweet Home Community Chapel (GCM) in the 1940s and Eugene's North Park Community Church (MB) in the 1960s, both considered mission churches by their respective conferences. Some of the first members were Mennonites. The Sweet Home group included some dissatisfied OMs who left their nearby congregation. The Eugene group included a variety of Mennonites who moved there for employment and wanted to begin a Mennonite congregation. Assistance in establishing a congregation came from the MB conference. In both instances, reaching neighborhood people with the gospel was a primary goal, but the church also served resident Mennonites who regarded their congregation as a mission work.

For all three Oregon groups, a "city mission" in Portland was a major focus. By the late nineteenth century, all three groups had members living there. MB families began moving to Portland in 1886, but until the congregation disbanded about 1938, the MB conference viewed it as a mission, even though for some years there was both congregation and mission. For GCMs and OMs, mission was the primary impetus for starting Portland work in the 1920s, although they also wanted a church home for their families and young people who lived and worked in the city. When the GCM congregation organized, it held almost equal footing with other conference congregations, except for financial dependence and occasional administrative decisions from an overseeing board. The OM congregation in Portland was also financially dependent but had less autonomy than the GCM mission, until 1955 when its board discontinued its mission status.

Another major mission emphasis among Oregon Mennonites focused on institutions such as hospitals and homes. In 1916, the Dallas and Salem area Mennonites (GCM, MB, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren) began a deaconness hospital in Salem that established an excellent reputation. When its generosity undermined its financial base, it was eventually turned over to a community board. In 1947, both the PCC (OM) and Dallas Mennonites began homes for the aged intended to serve both their own people and needy non-Mennonites. Such institutions of mercy were viewed as important in their mission to the larger world. Early reports occasionally mentioned the conversion of a resident.

While Oregon's OMs emphasized mission Sunday schools and congregational development more than GCMs and MBs, the latter groups promoted foreign missions more strongly. Members of their congregations served throughout the world, both under the boards of their larger church groups and under independent mission boards. Only a few Oregon OMs served overseas under their general mission board, which some of their leaders did not totally trust. In the 1950s Oregon OMs began mission work in Mexico. The first workers slipped into an independent mode as they adopted Pentecostal emphases. The next group of OM missionaries maintained a mutually satisfactory relationship with the sending board while establishing several small mission congregations. However, in the 1960s strained relationships and division within the conference took its toll on the Mexico work, and it declined when several couples terminated their service. In spite of setbacks, many Oregon Mennonites retained a strong commitment to the Mexico mission. It was something they could claim as their own, in a way that mission work under their faraway larger church board was not.

Measuring "success"

Measuring "success" in mission efforts is an imprecise and subjective activity. Who can adequately assess the spiritual commitment and growth of persons touched by congregations, evangelists, and other individuals? Not all agree on the essential fruits of discipleship. What is fervent spirituality to some may be superfluous emotionalism to others. Conversely, the thoughtful searching and studied answers of some may seem a mere intellectual game to others. Humility is lost when personal methods and measurements are considered the only valid ones. Some Oregon Mennonites found it difficult to combine confidence in their own faith, on the one hand, with acknowledgement of their own fallibility, on the other.

Another assessment of success could be whether unity supersedes differences—but that, too, can be ambiguous. Does that mean unity is more successful than faithfulness? Who defines the terms? If organizational unity is the criterion, Oregon Mennonites can chalk up both successes and failures. However, among OMs, those who went separate ways developed a renewed respect for each other in the end. Could that be a form of unity amid differences? People whose faith required precise answers to minute details—as well as larger issues—experienced less internal unity than those who acknowledged some of faith's ambiguities.

What has attracted new members and kept its current ones in Oregon's Mennonite congregations? What has met spiritual needs of people, whether new or ethnic Mennonites? For some, it is loyalty to their Mennonite body. For others, personal preferences and convictions are influential. Some people prefer a congregation with a particular style of expression and emotion in worship. Others want a compatible theological or doctrinal position. Certainly one common quest is a sense of caring and acceptance in the congregation, of reaching out in openness to those who come with questions, hurts, and loneliness. Amid mobility and fragmentation, both ethnic and non-ethnic

Mennonites wish to be welcomed and made to feel at home. But in spite of a strong sense of fellowship and commonality in Oregon Mennonite congregations, many are decreasing in number.

Measuring success by numbers is fraught with hazards, but if it is not considered definitive, such observation can stimulate helpful reflection (see chart below). In 1965, a few years after two congregations had left the OM Pacific conference and shortly before a major migration of other congregations, the conference—comprised mostly of Oregon congregations—had a high of 2,435. In 1976 membership was not quite 1,800 (this excludes about 100 members in Mexico who apparently were not counted in 1965). Adding in approximately 750 unaffiliated Mennonites (UM), formerly associated with the conference, brings the total to about 2,550—a net increase in one decade of about 100 members among the same group of congregations. In 1990 the conference—with eight additional congregations—and the UMs totaled about 2,850, a net increase of about 300 in fourteen years. By then the UM congregations totaled about 100 fewer than in 1976, leaving the conference with a net gain of about 400.[2]

Numerical comparisons among GCMs and MBs are also of interest. In the mid-1940s, the GCMs had four Oregon congregations with about 625 members. In the mid-1970s, five congregations totaled about 950 members, but by 1990 four congregations totaled only about 550. Significant losses came in the 1980s when the Emmanuel congregation withdrew from the PDC (GCM) to become a Bible church, and the smaller Sweet Home Community Chapel also discontinued its conference relationship. Oregon's MBs show a similar trend, from approximately 500 members in two congregations in the mid-1950s, to 700 members in three congregations in the mid-1970s, and to 420 in the same congregations in 1990. Only Eugene's North Park Community Church was slightly larger in 1990 than in 1976; in 1990, the other two (older) MB congregations had from much less than half to slightly more than half of their 1976 membership.

One can search for clues to explain the modest increases or the actual decreases in membership of Oregon Mennonite groups. Economic factors often influenced the declining numbers. Technology, consolidation, or recession affected both of Oregon's two major industry groups—agriculture and wood products industries. Often Mennonites felt the pinch and looked elsewhere for work. In addition, many young people left their home communities and did not return. Increasing mobility created frequent losses and new stresses for Mennonite congregations. Probably the greatest influences have been differing theological perspectives, disagreement over biblical interpretation concerning contemporary social issues, power struggles, and personality conflicts. Many former Mennonites can be found in other denominations or in fundamentalist community churches.

The self-identity of Oregon Mennonites may have influenced their numbers, but not consistently. Of the seven congregations (GCM, OM, or MB) which exchanged their Mennonite name for an identity as a Bible or community church, several experienced moderate or significant growth in numbers for a time, but incomplete records suggest that few, perhaps none, claimed more members in 1990 than at their peak in an earlier year. Two of Oregon's more charismatic congregations increased more than one hundred percent between 1976 and 1990. But neither eliminated its nominal Mennonite identity, although such an identity may be insignificant to many of its new, nonethnic members. Conversely, increased numbers in several congregations could be attributed to their Mennonite identity in a world where people search for ways to practice peace and justice. Several congregations (UM in 1990) with more separatist positions in relation to the larger culture—such as attire—basically held their own. Such observations suggest that congregations de-emphasizing their Mennonite identity were no more successful in keeping their own or attracting new nonethnic members than were the more self-consciously Mennonite congregations.

The process by which Mennonites established their self-identity changed somewhat over the century (1876-1976) and in subsequent years. Church publications and visiting ministers helped early Oregon Mennonites identify themselves. In later generations, the training Mennonite young people and their pastors received was perhaps a stronger influence. Thoughtful observation suggests several possible trends. Especially before mid-twentieth century, many of Oregon's MBs, GCMs, and some OMs attended fundamentalist Bible schools or seminaries. For them, Mennonite identity was often less important. Conversely, those Mennonites who attended Mennonite colleges and/or seminaries were more likely to have and promote a Mennonite identity in their congregations and in their personal and congregational outreach.

Perhaps Oregon Mennonites have best combined a Mennonite identity with a mission/service emphasis in their participation in such inter-Mennonite efforts as the

Memberships of Oregon Mennonites (MG, GCM, MB) 1920-1990

	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Pacific Coast Conference (MC) (Most congregations in Oregon)	816[1]	1051	1582	1752	2260	1935[2]	1833	2311
Pacific District Conference (GCM) (Oregon congregations only)	(1922) 190	(1931) 269	(1944) 685	882	917	920	784	612[3]
Pacific District Conference (MB) (Oregon congregations only)	120	189	(1941) 344	602	484	600	(1981) 515	420

[1]1920 PCC figures, 1921 AM figures, at time of MC/AM merger.

[2]In the 1960s, nine congregations wihtdrew from the conference, followed by two in the 1970s.

[3]In the 1980s, two congregations withdrew from the conference; 1990 figures include 109 members from two dual-conference (GCM-MC) congregations

Mennonite Central Committee relief sale since the early 1980s and in Mennonite Disaster Service. In those efforts, many have put aside theological variations and worked together to meet human needs in the name of the Christ they all attempt to follow, with an unmistakable Mennonite identity.

Notes

1. Information collected from Pacific District Conference minutes; Kansas-Nebraska Conference Record, pp. 131-32; and Enns-Rempel, et al., *75 Years of Fellowship*, p. 33ff.

2. These figures do not include congregations which never belonged to the Pacific Coast Conference.

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Exploring New Religious Movements: Two Reviews

Exploring New Religious Movements: Essays in Honour of Harold W. Turner. Edited by A. F. Walls and Wilbert R. Shenk. Elkhart, IN: Mission Focus Publications, 1990, 215 pp., $12.75 (pb).

Reviewed by Ivan Friesen

Each Sunday morning when I step through the doorway of the Spiritual Healing Church in Gaborone, Botswana, and enter the meeting place of one of Africa's so-called independent churches—I say "so-called" because the adherents refer to their churches as *Spiritual* Churches—I find myself stepping into another world. It is a world, however, in which I am a participating observer. It is this immediate, personal background of cross-cultural experience which inspired these reflections on the collection of essays entitled *Exploring New Religious Movements* written in honor of Harold W. Turner.

Andrew F. Walls, director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh, and Wilbert R. Shenk, formerly of Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Indiana, present this *festschrift*. The sixteen essays address various issues relating to the study of new religious movements around the world. The essays may be categorized under five or six themes, although they are not classified this way in the collection itself. My reflections on African independent churches based on my experiences are gathered under these group headings.

Turner's contribution to the phenomenology of religion. Three essays in the collection address Harold W. Turner's contribution to the phenomenology of religion. Andrew Walls' essay ("Building to Last: Harold Turner and the Study of Religion") introduces the reader to the scope of Turner's contribution. P. R. McKenzie's essay ("Phenomenology and 'the Centre'—The Leicester Years") recounts Turner's efforts to establish the study of new religious movements. Finally, Jocelyn Murray provides a "Bibliography for Dr. Harold W. Turner."

Andrew Walls catches a glimpse of Turner's approach by noting his role as a participant observer in the Church of the Lord (Aladura) in Sierra Leone in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Walls' reference to Edwin Weaver, Mennonite mission worker who concentrated on personal relationships with and service to independent church leaders instead of seeking to establish a Mennonite church, caught my attention because of its relevance to Mennonite mission work in Botswana in the early 1990s. The "Weaver philosophy" of mission is still on trial; it remains to be seen whether there is strong enough vision among the sending churches to sustain the philosophy.

My own "service to" the Spiritual Healing Church takes the form of response to requests during the worship services—sometimes to pray, sometimes to participate in a service of healing or blessing, sometimes to speak the benediction, sometimes to give a teaching. As such I serve as an "honorary *moruti* (minister)" in the Gaborone congregation. But for me the "service to" component is also reciprocal, as it was for Ed and Irene Weaver. I am learning to move in worship; I am learning the rhythm of music that is danced.

Phenomenology of religion. There is one essay on the phenomenology of religion. Hans-Jürgen Greschat discusses " 'The Founder' of Prophet Movements and the Phenomenology of Religion." The essay provides summaries of what several noted European phenomenologists of religion have thought about prophet movements.

Greschat's quotation of Rudolf Otto's description of a holy man has many points of contact with the prophet and founder of the Spiritual Healing Church, Jacob Mokaleng Motswaosele (d. 1980). Prophet Mokaleng died before I came to Botswana, but his photograph is on the wall of the Spiritual Healing Church in Gaborone. His two sons hold important positions, one as archbishop of the church and the other as the current prophet. I have been present at interviews of one of Prophet Mokaleng's "disciples" who worked closely with him for a decade. The prophet was a man of extraordinary personality and power and was at the center of a healing ministry in northeastern Botswana from 1950-70. He made an unmistakable impression on all who met him, and his founding of an independent church is undeniably bound up with his stature as a prophet.

Humanism. There is one essay on humanism ("Has Humanism a Religious Dimension?") by James Thrower, which reflects on a question addressed to the author by Harold Turner. This essay, though well argued and of more than passing interest to me, is somewhat marginal to the focus of the collection, though it merits careful scrutiny by anyone interested in the issue of religion as an influence—positive or negative—on human development.

Missiology. One essay in the collection is devoted to reflection on missiology. Wilbert Shenk's chapter entitled "The Contribution of the Study of New Religious Movements to Missiology" concludes the collection (apart from the bibliography of Harold Turner's writings by Jocelyn Murray). It explores the relationship between missiology and new religious movements, particularly how missiology might learn from these movements. This is a commendable perspective.

Shenk builds a framework for understanding the relationship between missiology and new religious movements, calling for a relationship of mutual submission between the orthodoxies of Western Christianity and the orthopraxes of new religious movements. How realistic is this? Local congregations have enough trouble with mutual submission among members—if there is a vision for it at all—without expecting it to happen from the top down. I find it difficult to visualize Western Christianity submitting its orthodoxies for scrutiny by new religious movements. But Shenk is not necessarily speaking of a top-down model. Mennonite interest in new religious movements, I suspect, has come about because there is still a conscious bent toward orthopraxy in the way Mennonites view discipleship and the great commission. The result has been a sympathetic identification with the orthopraxes of new religious movements.

Theological reflection on new religious movements. Two essays provide conscious theological reflection on new religious movements. One is Walter J. Hollenweger's "The Theological Challenge of the Indigenous Churches" and the other is Carl F. Starkloff's "The New Primal Religious Movements: Towards Enriching Theology as Hermeneutic." Both raise interesting questions and challenges.

Hollenweger's reference to healing as a central aspect of indigenous churches is worth noting. The Spiritual Healing

Church, in my experience, understands sickness in a broader sense than simply physical deficiency. Worship services always include healing as a significant component. I remember a three-hour service led by the archbishop which included the usual prayers for physical healing, the reception of twenty newly-baptized members, the blessing of babies, and the robing of four members. There were prayers for four people who left the church and now wished to return ("backsliders") and two who wished to join the church. In conclusion, there were prayers for four individuals with drinking problems and for three men living with common-law wives with the admonition that they should get legally married. This demonstration of healing as a spiritual, physical, emotional, and social phenomenon has challenged me to reclaim healing as a ministry of the church.

Starkloff's conviction is that all religions contain elements that go beyond mere magic, all aspire for transcendence in some way, all have some ethical consciousness. If there is to be dialogue with new religious movements, there must be a fundamental openness to new experiences of God's activity.

New religious movements. Half of the essays address new religious movements, focusing on Africa. These include essays by Lamin Sanneh ("New and Old in Africa's Religious Heritage: Islam, Christianity and the African Encounter"), Janet Hodgson (" 'Don't Fence Me In': Some Problems in the Classification of African Religious Movements"), Jack Thompson ("An Independent Church Which Never Was: The Case of Jonathan Chirwa"), John Parratt ("The Malikebu Case"), Rosalind Hackett ("Enigma Variations: The New Religious Movements in Nigeria Today"), Joseph Chakanza ("New Religious Movements in Malawi: A Bibliographical Review"), and David Shank ("African Christian Religious Itinerary: Toward An Understanding of the Religious Itinerary from the Faith of African Traditional Religion(s) to That of the New Testament"). One essay, by James Irwin ("Maori Primal Religion"), focuses on a new religious movement in Oceana.

These authors are keenly aware that many African Christians want to deal with Christianity on their own terms, to paraphrase a comment by Janet Hodgson. "The carriage of Christianity, bearing down on a straight line from the Western world, has been unscrambled to fit it out for the different terrain of Africa," says Lamin Sanneh in a wonderful turn of phrase. While Western Christianity's penchant for orthodoxy and creedal statements often outdistanced its stress on orthopraxy, this neglect of orthopraxy may have allowed greater variety in the expressions of African Christianity.

Within the Spiritual Healing Church, the Apostles' Creed is read rapidly and not thoughtfully by the worship leader, as if to say, "The creed is part of our background but it is not central to our life." Although the Spiritual Healing Church comes out of the larger Protestant tradition where the vision of Christianity may be regulated by a doctrine of sin, this is not emphasized in the Spiritual Healing Church. Rather, it emphasizes protection and healing and meeting the needs left unmet by mission churches. It rejects the giving of sacrifices to ancestors but retains communication with ancestors. Understanding the pervasive fear of sorcery, the church replaces the protective rituals of the traditional religion with its own rituals, which emphasize faith in the protection of God. Traditional healing practices, on the one hand, and scientific medicine, on the other, are not rejected, but neither is seen as adequate to meet all of the needs for healing in modern society. Divine healing in effect replaces much of traditional healing practice while working together in a complementary way with modern medicine.

Ivan Friesen, teacher at the University of Botswana, is seconded by Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Overseas Mission.

Reviewed by Stan Nussbaum

Harold W. Turner, now retired in his native New Zealand, pioneered the scholarly field of religious movements in primal societies, founded the Centre for New Religious Movements (CENERM) at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England, prepared a six-volume annotated bibliography on religious movements (three volumes still at the publishers), and through long contact with people such as Wilbert Shenk and Ed and Irene Weaver was the stimulus for Mennonite ministry with African independent churches. This *festschrift* is a fitting tribute to his life's work, a demonstration of how rich and stimulating his thinking has been.

Sixteen friends from eleven countries have developed, stretched, and challenged his work in this volume. Nine chapters could be classified as belonging to the field of religious studies, four to missiology and three to biography, relating to Turner's own life.

Religious studies. Of the religious studies articles, Hans-Jürgen Greschat explains how the subject of new religious movements has been neglected in the field of religious studies on the continent of Europe, even by phenomenologists such as Van der Leeuw, Heiler, and Widengren, whose theories should have led them to strong interest in contemporary prophets. Janet Hodgson and Rosalind Hackett explore different adjustments to Turner's typology of religious movements in light of changing situations in South Africa and Nigeria respectively. Lamin Sanneh sets West African independent churches in the broader context of the interaction of Christianity, Islam, and traditional religion over several centuries. Joseph Chakanza contributes a bibliographical review concerning movements in Malawi, and James Thrower adds an article on the definitions of religion and humanism—not an incongruous piece but an interesting discussion of the relation of religion and secularism which has always interested Harold Turner, and which he is writing more about in his retirement. Rounding out this category are two historical case studies by Jack Thompson and John Parratt, both on Malawi and both with strong missiological implications.

Missiology. The missiological articles are probably the ones of most interest to *Mission Focus* readers. They are substantial and mostly original material, well worth the price of the whole book. Walter Hollenweger and Carl Starkloff argue along separate but fairly compatible lines on the significance of the movements for contextualizing theology. Wilbert Shenk provides a historical sketch of the development of missiology as a discipline and the things which the discipline now has to gain from the study of new movements, e.g., contextualization, understanding the nature of theology, church growth dynamics, development, and ecumenism. My personal favorite is the article by David Shank. He has produced a very Turner-esque chart called "A Religious Itinerary from African Traditional Religion to New Testament Faith" (p. 154). It raises many questions and will no doubt be refined by others in subsequent writings, but it sets out an extremely useful model for discussion.

Biography. Three biographical pieces are included, one by Turner's closest colleague over many years (Andrew Walls), one on his work at the University of Leicester (Peter McKenzie), and one which is a complete bibliography of Turner's own work, divided into periods in New Zealand, West Africa, Leicester, U.S., Aberdeen, and Birmingham (Jocelyn Murray).

The popular conception of "new religious movements" may lead people to assume mistakenly from the title that this book deals with movements in Western societies such as Hare Krishna and Scientology. In fact, none of the articles deals with those movements at all. This is slightly surprising since Turner did have some fairly longstanding contacts with the Unification Church, though his main interest was always primal-related movements. One hopes that the book will not be neglected or overlooked because of popular misinterpretation of the title. It deserves attention by those with interest in mission in the two-thirds world, especially where traditional or local religion still influences a society.

Stan Nussbaum is director of the Centre for New Religious Movements (recently renamed Interact Research Centre) which Harold Turner founded at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England. He is supported in this position by five Mennonite mission and service agencies.

In Review

On the Move: A History of the Hispanic Church in the United States. By Moises Sandoval. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 152 pp., $8.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Jose M. Ortiz

The title is accurate—*On the Move*—but to where is the Hispanic Catholic Church moving? Less than five percent of Hispanic Catholic youth attend mass regularly. Yet numerically Hispanics will comprise the largest ethnic membership of the church by the close of the century. Moises Sandoval describes the struggle of U.S. Hispanic Catholics from colonial days to urban barrios. A Maryknoll editor, Sandoval writes like the evangelist Luke, giving an eyewitness report, in this case with a liberationist bent.

In 1974 Patricio Flores, the first native Hispanic to be appointed bishop in nearly 470 years of history, attended a Hispanic Mennonite Conference in Sandia, Texas. He confessed: "I came to this meeting thinking the Mennonites were a Catholic order!" In a natural way he delivered his speech, fielded questions, shook hands, and said "Adios." As I read this book, I realized that Flores and I come from two traditions but face the same issues. *On the Move* is the story of racism and discrimination suffered by Hispanics—whether Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or refugees from Central and South America.

Hispanics suffered language discrimination. In a Santa Fe congregation with 98 percent Hispanics and where 80 percent of confessions were offered in Spanish, the parish priest offered mass, not in Spanish, but in Polish! Likewise, Franciscans required seminarians to study six hours of German, not Spanish.

The Spanish developed missions from San Diego to Santa Rosa, but within 50 years all their priests were Irish. Structures and clergy were committed to Americanization at the expense of sharing the gospel. Mexicans did not "qualify" for seminary; their nuns took vows to serve as maids for Anglo institutions. Youngsters followed the harvest because of economic pressures, which meant schooling was not an option. In spite of that, most Catholic priests came out of the peasantry.

At ecumenical meetings I have met Pablo Sedillo, Vigilio Elizondo, Cesar Chavez, and other Catholics with social conscience. They were in "la lucha," a struggle I relate to within the Mennonite Church. They felt that the institutional church statements on justice were "a total lie, a double-cross." Hispanics responded with "defeatism," apathy, indifference, and passivity as they moved into the 1980s.

Hope for Hispanic Christians in Catholic and Protestant circles is not in Washington or Rome or other denominational headquarters, but in being God's people, teaching and living the Word, through *cursillos, encuentros, jornadas,* and gatherings to celebrate Christ's presence until the group develops a political program. Will Hispanic Catholics develop a will (*ganas*) to lead their own destiny, or will they move to the Protestant camp as over four million have done?

Jose M. Ortiz is director for Hispanic Ministries at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

The Biblical Principle of Discipleship. By Allan Coppedge. Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1989, 175 pp., $13.95.

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

As a believer within the Anabaptist tradition, I have always been fascinated and challenged by the concept of discipleship. Personally, I have gained much by reading reflectively such books as Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship,* McDonald's *True Discipleship,* Henricksen's *Disciples Are Made, Not Born,* Eims' *Lost Art of Discipleship,* and Coleman's *Master Plan of Discipleship.* That same interest drew me to this book.

Coppedge is professor of theology at Asbury Theological Seminary. The readers will appreciate his focus on the essence of discipleship, not merely on conditions and action.

He points out in a somewhat Wesleyan tradition that evangelicals have generally recognized two "crucial points for preaching and teaching" on discipleship but neglected a third. Their focus has been on "saving grace" and on "a call to the deeper commitment of the baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a sign of "surrender to Christ and His Lordship over them." But what they have overlooked is the real essence of discipleship, namely, "following Jesus" in life.

"Discipleship is based on personal relationships," says Coppedge. Therefore, "discipleship is not a static event or condition, but a process." Again he says, "Disciples . . . will walk in obedience to Jesus in all that He says and in all that the Father has written down for them in the Holy Scriptures."

The eleven chapters of the book focus on becoming disciples, learning as disciples, and living out the life of discipleship in following Christ. As an Anabaptist, I was disappointed that the author does not make more use of Anabaptist/Mennonite writings, though he does list Bender's book *These Are My People* in his bibliography.

Hans Kasdorf is professor of world mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California.

Crisis in Latin America: An Evangelical Perspective. By Emilio A. Nunez and William D. Taylor. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989, 439 pp., $19.95 (pb).

Reviewed by David J. Falk

This book is coauthored by two individuals with a great deal of Latin American experience. Emilio Nunez is an El Salvadoran who has taught for many years at the Central American Seminary in Guatemala. William Taylor has worked as a missionary in Central America for many years and is now secretary of the missions commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. Both classify themselves as conservative evangelicals.

The book aims to provide an updated view of Latin America from an evangelical perspective. Taylor begins with five chapters on Latin American history, human crises, and spiritual dimensions. These chapters are somewhat predictable from a conservative evangelical viewpoint. Taylor places a great deal of political hope in the Christian Democrats and repeatedly eulogizes the Guatemalan evangelical president, Rios Montt. Despite these limitations, however, the chapters contain valuable information for understanding present-day Latin America.

The second section, by Nunez, comprises eight theological essays on issues facing Latin American evangelicals. Nunez first discusses the Catholic Church in light of Vatican II. He primarily focuses on liberation theology and the charismatic movement which he treats sympathetically, yet critically. While liberation theology, in Nunez' opinion, remains an aberrant reading of the biblical text, it challenges the evangelical political option of noninvolvement. When Nunez turns to the evangelical church in Latin America, he urges her to develop a more contextualized message. He warns, however, of an uncritical contextualization which tends to distort the gospel. This will lead to greater social responsibility and an awakened social conscience.

Nunez' contribution is more scholarly and perceptive than Taylor's, but his chapters are more disjointed, likely written as individual pieces before being incorporated into the book. Taylor concludes the book with a final chapter on the missiological question and offers some advice for mission agencies and missionary candidates bound for Latin America.

In general, Nunez and Taylor make a valuable contribution to the topic. The book contains a wealth of information and fine analytical articles. This serves as a good introduction to Latin America, provided the reader can ignore some of the conservative evangelical hobbyhorses.

David Falk works in theological education with Commission on Overseas Mission in Campinas, Brazil. He previously served with Mennonite Brethren Mission/Services in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations. By Gustavo Gutiérrez. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990 (first published in Spanish, 1986), 204 pp., $29.95, $12.95 (pb).
Gustavo Gutiérrez: An Introduction to Liberation Theology. By Robert McAfee Brown. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 224 pp., $9.95 (pb).
Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment. By Arthur F. McGovern. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989, 281 pp., $14.95 (pb).
Liberation Theology: A Documentary History. Alfred T. Hennelly, ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 547 pp., $34.95, $19.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Titus F. Guenther

Any one of these four excellent books on liberation theology would suffice to offer the reader an initial representative picture of this theology; together they provide a rounded or composite introduction to the subject. One is written from the "inside" by a Latin American. The other three are by North Americans, one Protestant and two (Jesuit) Catholics.

Since there is substantial overlap between these books, I propose to highlight the merits and shortcomings of each book in turn.

The Truth Shall Make You Free is a convenient and eloquent summary of his theological work to date by a matured Gutiérrez. It consists of three self-contained chapters, with some overlapping material.

In Gutiérrez' defense speech in 1985 at the Catholic Institute of Lyons (ch.1), the "classic" themes of liberation theology—i.e., primacy of the commitment to a liberating praxis; a "preferential option for the poor" (not because they are good, but because the God and Jesus of the Bible loves them), and others—stand out boldly. But one also notes certain nuances that were less pronounced in his early writings: balanced emphases on the "prophetic" and "spirituality" dimensions in theology. "Poverty" is given a more inclusive definition (cf. p. 70).

The ensuing "discussion" with the jury illustrates well the ongoing tension between liberation theology and traditional (northern) theology. Gutiérrez admits the need for further refinement but is able to defend the basic concerns which inspire liberation theology from its inception.

In the middle chapter, the author contends that it is possible to use critical social analysis in theology without thereby adopting the accompanying (Marxist) "ideology." Did not theology always borrow from its intellectual surroundings? The Greek fathers—Augustine, Aquinas, Barth, and Rahner—we are reminded, all did so (p. 89). But in contrast to Marxism, to speak of the "fact" of the "class struggle" in Latin America does not lead Gutiérrez to see it as "the driving force of history" (p. 72). Instead of leading to "materialist determinism," the admission of the de facto social conflict is, however, the indispensable first step toward the freedom implied in the permanent and universal demand of Christian love, including "love of our enemies" (p. 79).

In the third chapter, drawing extensively on his own writings, Gutiérrez offers a step-by-step response to Rome's critical "instructions" on liberation theology during the 1980s. He draws on Scripture and tradition, including recent social teachings by the Catholic Church (even of the present pope) to show that his theology is orthodox.

Gutiérrez finds his vision for a "total or integral liberation" already implied in the Council of Chalcedon, with its stress on both the "human and the divine" in Christ, since the two dimensions may be "neither confused nor separated." He does not, however, reduce liberation to the "horizontal" level, even though salvation must involve changing the sinful structures.

While sociopolitically conscious, his theology is clearly not oblivious toward the transcendent but is profoundly Christocentric (cf. pp. 3f., 80, 104f.). Christ, not ideology, is the norm for Christian living: "Christian praxis derives its meaning from the following of Jesus, from the practice of the Lord himself" (p. 104).

Gutiérrez's book resonates with believers church themes such as committed discipleship, the importance of all people including the most humble, the demand of justice but also of universal love, even love of enemy. However, in one area he leaves me less than satisfied. Gutiérrez's concept of "the church" remains hazy—perhaps because of a vestige of Christendom Catholicism which tacitly assumes all of society, being baptized, to be a part of it. Perhaps not unrelated is the fact that Gutiérrez nowhere acknowledges the existence of a plurality of churches, of there being other church communions. Thus the question of the importance of building ecumenical relations, of the need to collaborate with all families of believers in a more effective search for genuine liberation, cannot surface.

This weakness notwithstanding, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* is an impressive summary of the essence of Gutiérrez' theological thinking.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, by the Protestant theologian, Robert McAfee Brown, is a veritable road map through the works of Gutiérrez. In many ways, it is a corroboration of Gutiérrez's book *The Truth Shall Make You Free.*

Brown gives first a "collective biography," which situates liberation theology in Latin American political and church history (ch. 1). Then, in an "individual biography," he places Gutiérrez in his larger sociotheological context (ch. 2).

Brown likens the emergence of the liberation theology movement to real-life "street theatre" in which cast and audience, in the end, become indistinguishable. After introducing the author and actors at the beginning of the book, Brown proceeds (chs. 3-7) to unfold the "play" in several "acts" and "scenes." In chapters 3 and 5, he develops eloquently the primary themes and emphases of liberation theology. Above all, it starts with the situation and experience of the poor "from the underside of history" and of God's love for them.

Its new way of doing theology consists in starting with a primary commitment to solidarity with and liberation of the poor, called **praxis** (p. 50ff.); then comes theological reflection on that praxis, involving analytical tools from the social sciences (p. 75ff.). But ultimately, the reflecting is done in the light of the word of God (p. 102ff.). Theological reflection, though a "second act," is not a "secondary" act, Brown insists. Rather it stands in a cyclical, reciprocal relation to the commitment of praxis (cf. p. 115, et al.), so as to forestall blind activism and abstract speculation alike.

In chapter 6 Brown deals with Gutiérrez's detailed refutation of Rome's criticisms of his liberation theology, demonstrating his "orthodoxy." Finally, in chapter 7 the readers are drawn "on stage" to witness the eruption and spread of liberation theologies around the globe, engulfing and demanding of them a concrete response to its message.

The book's subtitle, *An Introduction to Liberation Theology*, is accurate, but the book is much more an introduction to Gutiérrez than to liberation theology generally. Brown's self-confessed "partisanship" (p. 156) is both his strength and his weakness. On the one hand, it allows him to construct a glowingly positive picture of Gutiérrez (a bit exaggerated, when his "significance in articulating the faith today" is claimed to surpass "the combined faculties of Tubingen, Oxford, and Rome," p. 129). On the other hand, it prevents him from raising legitimate criticisms. McGovern's *Liberation Theology and Its Critics* thus offers a more nuanced supplement on this score.

An added bonus in Brown's book is its two appendices. The first is "Writings by Gustavo" (pp. 185-95), offering reviews of Gutierrez's ten books plus "representative articles" by and "interviews" with him. The second is "Writings by Others" (pp. 197-201), including an "Overall Bibliographical Help" on liberation theology, offering a shortcut to new students.

We are in Brown's debt for synthesizing and interrelating Gutiérrez's growing number of books into a systematic, rounded corpus.

Liberation Theology and Its Critics by the Jesuit philosopher-theologian, Arthur McGovern, is the most nuanced of the four books under discussion. Besides giving a succinct preview of the book in his "introductory comments," McGovern alludes here to the most common points of tension between liberation theologians and their critics. McGovern notes from the start that, while it is legitimate to speak of "one movement" (he will himself treat it as one "common body of writings"), some liberation theologians are discerning up to four markedly different "currents" or "tendencies"—Segundo speaks of two distinct "approaches"—within the movement. This point was scarcely noted in the other books I reviewed.

McGovern gives special attention to how Latin America's "historical heritage" (ch. 6; also 1, 10) gives rise to and shapes liberation theology's development. But the central focus of the book is "the major themes in liberation theology" (p. xviii). Chapter 2 deals with the "new way of doing theology" (method), while chapter 3 offers "an overview" of the major criticisms worldwide. Several chapters (4-9) deal with a variety of controversial themes that are the center of liberation theology—including questions of hermeneutics (e.g., on the exodus, the prophets, Christology), spirituality, feminism, Marxist analysis and dependency theory, foreign economic and political intervention, and capitalism versus socialism.

The final chapters (10-11) bring a welcome history of the "base communities" and the new "ecclesiology" which liberation theology develops and which these communities embody.

McGovern makes his own critical assessments repeatedly throughout the book. In my view, his is the fairest, most balanced "assessment" of both the protagonists and critics of liberation theology to date. While clearly coming down on the side of liberation theology, he points out numerous weaknesses in it that need critiquing: e.g., a simplistic tendency toward a wholesale rejection of all forms of "capitalism," which it counters "with an almost unquestioned faith in socialism" without sufficiently critiquing the destructiveness of freedom in its Marxist-Leninist expressions in history. McGovern is referring to early liberation writings; at present, he says, many liberation theologians carefully qualify their use of Marxist analysis while others do not use it at all. Those early writings have given unnecessary cause for the misunderstanding of the new theology.

As for the critics, many allege that all liberation theologians advocate violent revolution; or that they "exclude the transcendent as a matter of principle" (p. 92); or that by using Marxist analysis, liberationists must necessarily incorporate the ideology of atheism into their thinking. McGovern, by contrast, absolves liberation theology generally (perhaps too sweepingly) of advocating the use of violence and submits that critics should take note of the significant "evolutions" in liberation writings over the years. If the sociopolitical emphases tended to dominate early on, numerous books on spirituality have emerged during the 1980s.

Not surprisingly, in their sensitivity to the social context, the reaction by liberation theologians to the growing democratization in Latin America in the 1980s is markedly different from that evoked by the preceding military regimes, says McGovern—much as Niebuhr's thought was influenced negatively by Stalinism and positively by Roosevelt's New Deal (p. 56, et al.).

Some pointers as to how liberation theology might continue to fill out its blind spots by providing ethical norms to indicate "what 'means' are appropriate to Christian change and what means are not" (p. 233), plus his "Profiles of Liberation Theologians" (appendix), complete McGovern's highly commendable book.

What McGovern's book does by way of argumentation, Hennelly's *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History* does by way of documentation, namely, give voice to both supporters and critics of liberation theology through a rich selection of 59 individual essays or statements that have appeared between 1962 and 1988. It includes, among others, the critical exchange between liberation theologians and the Roman hierarchy, feminist and Protestant voices, Oscar Romero's "Last Sermon," and Karl Rahner's forthright letter from his deathbed to a conservative Latin American cardinal in defense of liberation theology.

By way of an organizing principle, Hennelly proposes the following six periods: (1) 1950s-1962 as the time when its "seeds" were planted with "forerunners up to the time of the conquest"; (2) 1962-68, "From Vatican II to Medellin"; (3) 1968-73 as a time of "Progress and Opposition"; (4) 1973-79 as a time of preparation for the Puebla conference; (5) 1979-86, "Puebla and the Polish Pope"; and (6) 1986-present, "Hopes and Concerns for the Future."

For less familiar readers, the Medellin conference (1968) "was not so much an application of Vatican II as a profound 'reinterpretation' of the council" in view of Latin America's own situation and experience (p. 40). The Puebla conference (1979) represents a defense and consolidation of the gains of Medellin for liberation theology against mounting conservative opposition (pp. 175-78).

The book's chief value lies unquestionably in offering to students of the new Latin American theology of liberation an impressive "library" in one volume of only 547 pages. Hennelly's contributions include a general introduction highlighting the chief characteristics and achievements of this theology, succinct explanations at the beginning of each period in question, and short annotations to each individual essay, making this an eminently practical book.

Though still in its "adolescent" phase, according to Hennelly, liberation theology already has some impressive achievements to boast; e.g., for the first time in history it has made the voice of "the mute and invisible four-fifths or four billion human beings of the world" clearly audible in "every corner of the planet" (p. xiii); it has also "reversed the flow of theology" northward in the 1980s, where eager readers await translation of original Spanish material into English, German, and French (p. 264, cf. p. xv, 267).

A couple of critical questions may be in place here. Why (despite inclusion of some writings by Protestants) are such major Protestant theologians as Miguez Bonino, Rubem Alvez, and Dorothy Solle absent from a documentary history of liberation theology? Might these not contribute a unique dimension to the movement? What about the ecumenicity of liberation theology?

Despite these questions, Hennelly's *A Documentary History* will be an invaluable source of reference for some time to come.

Titus Guenther is currently professor of church history at the Evangelical Theological Community in Santiago, Chile, in an assignment with Mennonite Board of Missions.

In the Parish of the Poor: Writings from Haiti. By Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books: 1990, 112 pp., $10.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Rachel Lehman Stoltzfus

In early 1986 I witnessed firsthand the charisma and prophetic fervor of Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide. His persistence on behalf of the poor during the chaotic years after Jean Claude Duvalier was ousted cost him his church, his priesthood, and nearly his life. In late 1990 Aristide was elected president of Haiti. The foreword by author/journalist Amy Wilentz defines the context and the man. As Aristide's advocate and translator, Wilentz skillfully communicates his passion and imagery.

The book is in two parts. "A Letter to My Brothers and Sisters" is Aristide's plea for solidarity and a personal documentation of the Haitian struggle for democracy. Directed to Latin American Christians with the "shared inheritance" of oppression, clearly he also intends to influence persons in the "cold country to the north." Though he faced abandonment by the church hierarchy in Haiti, he cites God's direction and protection. To traditional missions, Aristide says hypocrisy feeds children rather than organizing peasants to escape poverty: it is not enough. Four "Sermons and Messages" conclude the book. Rousing sermons in the tradition of Martin Luther King, they are spiced with Scripture references contextualized to local events.

This book is a chapter in the ongoing history of the liberation movement "in the parish of the poor," where a priest seeks to put his faith to work for his people. It marks where Aristide stood prior to his election. In his words: "There are others ... who do not mind conciliating the powers that sit around the great table, who believe that collaboration and compromise are a valid means in taking up our preferential option for the poor. In my heart I am sure that the way of total commitment is the right way, but perhaps time and life will change me.... I doubt it." Obviously, whatever compromises Aristide made in his short presidency, they were not enough to satisfy those opposing him. Recently, another chapter in Haiti's history was initiated with Aristide's overthrow.

Rachel Lehman Stoltzfus and her husband, Eldon, Goshen, Indiana, served in Haiti for eleven years, the last five as Mennonite Central Committee co-country representatives.

Images of Jesus: How Jesus is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures. By Anton Wessels. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company: 1990, 195 pp., $12.95.

Reviewed by Roelf Kuitse

This book discusses how Jesus is perceived and portrayed outside European cultures. Jewish and Muslim images of Christ show that in modern Jewish and Islamic thinking new attention is given to Jesus and the role he played in the religious history of humankind. Latin American thought portrays different images: "the scourged Christ" reflecting the suffering of people in Latin America, past and present; "the Spanish Christ" (from title by Mackay, misspelled Mac Kay) showing Christ as baby and victim on the cross, dependent on others; and "Christ as Liberator," the image of Christ in liberation theology. In the chapter on the "African Christ" the author talks of different christological titles used by Africans to describe Jesus' work—Victor, Chief, Ancestor, and especially Healer, used by the so-called African independent churches.

It is hard for one person to comprehend so many different cultures and to adequately explain the images of Jesus created in these cultures, as this author does. The chapter on "Christ and Tao" is nothing more than a chain of quotations borrowed from a Korean theologian, Jung Young Lee. Yet, the author clearly shows how response to Christ is partly determined by the cultural setting in which a person lives. In the last chapter he deals with New Testament images of Christ. Over against a "three-day-Christology" (Lapide), which focuses only on the last days of Jesus' life, Wessels emphasizes the importance of a "discipleship Christology" (J. B. Metz) which stresses that the only way to learn to know Christ is by following his way.

Images of Christ is a rich book, one which can help us see through the eyes of others and discover new dimensions of God's revelation in Christ.

Roelf Kuitse is professor of missions and world religions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

God's Call to Mission. By Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. Salunga, PA: 1991, 13 pp., $1.50 (pb).

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

This pamphlet replaces Eastern Mennonite Board of Mission's 1980 statement, *Pilgrimage in Missions.* It includes theological reflections, context of mission in the 1990s, and principles guiding mission strategy. The 21 affirmations of the Manila Manifesto (1989) are appended. This attractively produced statement provides a clear interpretation of this agency's goals and assumptions—both theological and contextual.

Wilbert R. Shenk is director of the Mission Training Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

A Relevant Anabaptist Missiology for the 1990s. Edited by Calvin E. Shenk. Elkhart, IN: Council of International Ministries, 1990, 178 pp., $18.00 (pb).

Reviewed by Richard Showalter

This discussion of relevant Anabaptist missiology was the central focus of two Council of International Ministries meetings in 1988. The six contributors to that discussion and to this volume—Hans Kasdorf, C. Norman Kraus, Charles R. Taber, Samuel Escobar, Wilbert R. Shenk, Calvin E. Shenk—review and critique missiological statements from various Mennonite/Brethren in Christ mission and service agencies in an attempt to clarify, refine, and extend a unified contemporary Anabaptist missiology. These missiological statements under review are printed in the appendices.

The contributors come from both inside and outside the Mennonite family of churches and represent a variety of academic disciplines, including missiology, theology, and anthropology. One contributor adds a Latin American perspective.

The issue singled out for most critical commentary is that of "holism" in missions—i.e., deed, word, *and* life integration; love for God *and* love for neighbor; spiritual *and* material; evangelism *and* social responsibility. Kasdorf, Kraus, and Taber each reflect extensively on word/deed dichotomies and unities from their unique disciplinary perspectives. Escobar *assumes* a holistic approach for Anabaptism in his references to costly discipleship. One impression from this volume is that while Anabaptists/Mennonites do possess a priceless historical deposit of holism, it is yet imperfectly claimed and expressed in

contemporary missions. Taber describes factors contributing to this split between spiritual and material, beginning in the earliest centuries of Christianity, and including the sixteenth-century Anabaptist understanding of separation from the world as one factor contributing to the dualism.

Influence by North American conservative expressions of Christianity has frequently been adduced as the major source of dualism in Mennonite missions, though more by theologians and historians than by missiologists. If Taber is correct, Anabaptist/Mennonite missiologists must wrestle with a non-biblical dualism closer to the core of their tradition than has usually been acknowledged. Could it be that Anabaptism, standing as it does at the fountainhead of the Western believers' church tradition, has helped to *create* the problem of "evangelism versus social responsibility" rather than to function as a solution? In the current preoccupation with holism, Anabaptist missiologists must respond thoughtfully to Taber's observation.

If Taber is not correct, the problem still remains—not then as part of the Anabaptist historical/theological core, but as a contemporary accretion and a widespread assumption. For example, the Lausanne movement has wrestled with the issue almost to the breaking point with contrasting assumptions (see *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1991, pp. 53-56). As Kasdorf points out, some theologies "prioritize their priorities" and some do not (p. 10). He argues that Anabaptists should not do so, and that the way to avoid such non-biblical prioritization is to maintain the centrality of the *gospel* in both evangelism and compassionate service (p. 16). In other words, good news is expressed equally in word and deed, and the two should not be prioritized. In fact, every word is a "deed" and every deed a "word," and the separation is always artificial.

Other issues identified and discussed throughout the compendium are: meaning of incarnation in mission, globalization of mission, missionary recruitment and training, eschatology and missions, the kingdom of God and missions, the Holy Spirit, other religions, and church growth movement, to name a few. A striking feature of the compilation is, as Kraus puts it, that "significant common affirmations dominate" the missiological statements under review, and that "the differences are muted" (p. 20).

This volume is both a finished product and a working document with special relevance to those interested in contemporary Anabaptist missiology as well as to theologians in general. As a collection, it is as much a discussion as a unified treatment. It contains an excellent overview of the development thus far of a theology of mission for Mennonites (Wilbert Shenk), and thoughtful sketches of the outlines of such a theology for the future (Wilbert Shenk; Calvin Shenk). But since the writers do not respond to one another within the volume, the real discussion continues beyond these pages. Is there such a forum?

To those attracted by the Anabaptist vision, one sentence may be worth the volume: "To recapture the Anabaptist vision, we must above all else recapture a missionary consciousness" (Wilbert Shenk, p. 48).

Richard Showalter is president of the Rosedale Bible Institute in Irwin, Ohio.

Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith. By Eugene A. Nida. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1990 rev. ed. (original 1960), 300 pp., $10.95.

Reviewed by Michael Mast

Message and Mission, first published in 1960 and reprinted three times, now comes in a revised edition. It is the most influential of Eugene A. Nida's thirty-some books. For many years Nida was a translations consultant with the American and United Bible Societies.

Nida proceeds from basic understandings about words being "symbols to describe behavior" to the problems of translation and cross-cultural communication. While giving priority to verbal communication of the Christian faith, he includes extensive discussions on social structure, religion, syncretism, and the cultural and psychological barriers to communication. There is an insightful chapter on indigenous people movements.

The implications for theology and missions are evident. Word symbols like "blood" must be investigated and "dynamic equivalents" must be found before they can be communicated meaningfully in other cultures. Church and cultural practices must also undergo a similar sort of translation.

This revised edition has virtually no new textual material. There are additions to the bibliography and index, but the footnotes were eliminated (some of the numbers were not!). The restructuring does little to help the diverse themes hang together.

One lasting value of this book is found in illustrations from a variety of cultures. It is unfortunate that Latin American missionaries will find only pre-Vatican II references to the Catholic Church. Its references to Mennonites as a group which sees Christ as against culture is also out of date.

Michael and Mattie Mast have been Mennonite Board of Missions workers with Toba Indians of northern Argentina since 1967.

Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem. By Jonathan J. Bonk. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991, 170 pp., $16.95.

Reviewed by Nancy Heisey

Missions and Money is a difficult book for Western Christians to read. Although well written and full of incisive illustrations, this book probes deeply into the wound already present in those aware of the vast gap between Western material wealth and the hard realities of life for most of the world's people. For those unaware of our wealth or at present unconcerned by its meaning for a worldwide Christian witness, Bonk's book may seem like a prolonged beating over the head with a hammer.

Jonathan Bonk states that *Mission and Money* was also a difficult book to write, a believable claim for one who has been part of the Western missionary enterprise since his days as a Canadian missionary kid in Ethiopia. But he has done his work thoroughly, beginning with a survey covering the relational and theological consequences of that affluence.

While limiting his concrete recommendations on how to grapple with missionary influence, Bonk challenges mission agencies to encourage workers who are ready to reduce life standards. He also calls for a revival of the 1930s missionary effort in India known as the Fellowship for Venturers in Simpler Living.

Only those with the courage to read Bonk's book should be considered ready for mission assignments, whether in other parts of the world or in contexts of poverty within North America. All Christians committed to mission should consider the extensive biblical outline in chapters 6-7 which presents the challenge for our conversion.

Nancy Heisey is associate executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. She and his husband, Paul Longacre, visited churches in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, and Latin America as part of the Mennonite International Study Project in 1987-89.

Mission in the 1990s. Edited by Gerald H. Anderson, James M. Phillips, and Robert T. Coote. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, and New Haven, CT: Overseas Ministries Study Center, 1991, 80 pp., $10.95.

Reviewed by Wilbert Shenk

Seventeen missiologists representing the global Christian mission have written high caliber essays which address key questions affecting mission in the final decade of the twentieth century. The essayists exude conviction for mission, confidence in the reign of God, a wholesome honesty about the humanity of the missioner, and concern to call the church to faithfulness. A strong note is sounded on the need for mission to the West by several of the writers.

This volume is enhanced by a special bibliography and cumulative index of books appearing over the past decade in the annual listing of the 15 outstanding books on mission compiled each year by *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Gerald H. Anderson's select bibliography of 175 books in English, published between 1970-1990 on "Christian Mission and Religious Pluralism," will be a standard reference for anyone wishing to delve into this theme.

This volume is warmly commended to all.

Wilbert R. Shenk is director of the Mission Training Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

The Nonresidential Missionary: A New Strategy and the People It Serves. By V. David Garrison. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1990, 161 pp., $9.95.

Reviewed by Peter Hamm

Here is a practical answer to mission strategists looking for an innovative approach to reaching the world's most inaccessible people with the gospel. The nonresidential missionary is not to be confused with a tentmaker, itinerant worker on home leave, the clandestine or "illegal" missionary, or even the researcher. Rather it is a specialist instrumental in evangelizing a people otherwise inaccessible.

Eight of the ten chapters deal with the strategy itself, four interspersed with case studies. The author explains the nonresidential base and the need to build a nondenominational network, then defines the task to reach a single people by prayer, Scripture, media, and a Christian presence. Explaining the genesis of the strategy, coined only in 1986, he describes the confluence of commitment, cooperation, new barriers, and new tools. Answering why so many have never heard, he identifies the barriers of culture, geography, politics, fragmented Christianity, and the "convenience" factor. He outlines a four-week training program on how to investigate the resources and target group, and how to develop strategies and logistics.

The final two chapters give a descriptive list of the 30 least-evangelized countries, 50 least-evangelized cities over 800,000 in size, and 100 least-evangelized people groups. He charts out the twelve-fold division of these people group alliances—all in Africa, Middle East, and Asia. Three substantive appendices further define the strategy, providing a helpful research guide and a glossary.

Designed out of a necessity to reach the otherwise inaccessible, this book about a non-incarnational approach to evangelism is important for mission strategists concerned with the world's most unevangelized people groups.

Peter Hamm was secretary of Africa, Asia, and Europe with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services for nine years prior to a one-year assignment working with African independent churches for Mennonite Board of Missions.

Islam, The Straight Path. By John Esposito. Oxford University Press: 1991, 250 pp., $21.95.

Striving Together, A Way Forward in Christian-Muslim Relations. By Charles Kimball. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 132 pp., $10.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Roelf Kuitse

John Esposito, professor of religion at Holy Cross College and president of the Middle East Studies Association, has written an excellent introduction to Islam. The first part of the book deals with the basic tenets of the Islamic religion, with chapters on Muhammad and the Quran, the Muslim community in history, and the religious life of Muslims expressed in belief and practice. The second part gives attention to modern developments and interpretations. Esposito describes the crisis of the Islamic community resulting from its encounter with modern civilization and the different ways Muslims respond to the challenges of modernity in fields such as law, education, women's rights, relation to religion-state, etc. The second part of the book explains the background of present-day developments in the Middle East. Special attention is given to developments in Lebanon, Iran, and Egypt.

The author fights against negative, distorted views of many people in the West regarding Islam—i.e., polygamy, holy war, fanaticism. In some cases he uncritically accepts the explanations given by Muslims of certain events. For example, should Muhammad's violent actions against the Jews in Medina be seen only as political motivation (p. 17), to save the Islamic community from the political threat of the Jews?

Charles Kimball, associate professor of religion at Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, calls our attention to Christian-Muslim relations. These were relations of fear and distrust which have contributed to negative and distorted judgments. Chapter 3 gives a historical overview of Christian-Muslim relations. There are a few exceptions to the negative, hostile approach, like Peter the Venerable and Francis of Assisi. In modern times we see some attempts to come to a more positive, understanding attitude.

The author emphasizes the importance of a non-exclusivist approach to Islam (p. 80), following Hans Küng in identifying seven parallels between Muhammad and the prophets of Israel. This non-exclusivist approach can lead to a dialogical encounter. Chapter 5 deals with the question of dialogue, noting the dialogue movement in the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. This well-written book points to new ways of relating to persons of other faith communities.

Roelf Kuitse is professor of mission and world religions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Funding Third World Missions. By Luis Bush. Singapore and Wheaton: World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission: 1990, 32 pp.

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

This booklet launches a new series under auspices of the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission. This one is devoted to the financing of missions from the two-thirds world. The dramatic growth of missions from other parts of the world has been possible through heroic commitment and sacrifice on the part of many faithful Christians from the poorer countries of the world. Examples of sacrificial living and giving are included. The booklet has a hortatory tone and does not offer much in the way of specific guidance.

Wilbert R. Shenk is director of Mission Training Center at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Third World Struggle for Peace with Justice: A Directory of Resources. Compiled and edited by Thomas P. Fenton and Mary J. Heffron. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 188 pp., $12.95.

Reviewed by Sara Regier

The goal of this resource directory is to promote peace education and give information about the struggle for peace with justice in the third world. Entries were selected to help explain the less publicized causes and impact of third world people's struggle *against* economic oppression and military repression and how they are struggling *for* the right to determine their own destinies in peace. The annotated entries are separated into chapters on organizations, books, periodicals, pamphlets and articles, and audiovisuals. Each chapter begins with criteria for selection and details for getting the resources. Supplementary resource listings for geographic regions are included at the end of each chapter.

The admitted bias of the resources listed is to support third world people's nonviolent efforts to establish peace based on justice and to give visibility and exposure to religious as well as secular publications and organizations that do not get exposure in the popular press.

A supporting grant from the Peace Section of Mennonite Central Committee for this volume, compiled by DataCenter's Third World Resources project, adds appeal to this book for Mennonites involved in missions and peace education. Mission administrators will find these resources a useful balance to the popular media interpretation. For mission workers the resource list is useful for becoming acquainted with specific countries and getting documentation about organizations working for justice in those locations.

Sara Regier is a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

Companion to the Poor. By Viv Grigg. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1990, 205 pp., $8.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Earl Zimmerman

Viv Grigg is a missionary from New Zealand with a passion for ministry among the urban poor in Asia's mega-cities. This book is an account of his life and ministry to a squatter community in Tatlon, Manila, and reflects his search for biblical and historical models of ministry to the poor.

The historical models Viv Grigg finds are varied, but he especially appreciates people like Toyohiko Kagawa of Japan and William Booth of England who lived directly with the poor and ministered holistically to their needs. The sections of biblical reflection are weak, tending toward world studies and selecting verses randomly with little attention to biblical context.

A strong theme of the book is that evangelicals dare not concentrate solely on people's spiritual needs and ignore social and physical realities. He vigorously attempts to correct what he feels is lacking in his fundamentalist tradition. From my Mennonite perspective some of his arguments seem like an effort to convince us of what we should already believe.

The insights into life and ministry that Viv Grigg gains from living in a squatter community give the book its strength. His understanding of the poor is not idealized. I concur that the rapidly growing slums and shantytowns of Asia are a big challenge as well as one of the most neglected areas in mission.

Earl Zimmerman has served for six years with Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in the Philippines.

A Force on the Earth: The Charismatic Renewal and World Evangelism. By David Shibley. Altamonte, FL: Creation House, 1989, 182 pp., $7.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Harold E. Bauman

David Shibley is founder and president of Global Advance, a ministry committed to motivating, training, and equipping the church for global evangelization. He travels internationally, ministering to missionaries and national churches.

Shibley's basic thesis is that evangelicals and charismatics need each other to achieve world evangelization. Evangelicals in the Lausanne Covenant provide the theological framework and charismatics the spiritual framework for cooperation toward world evangelization.

After discussing the "Why of World Missions?" and the fact that many denominations are now focusing on missions, Shibley discusses power evangelism. He holds that most of the human family has a supernatural orientation; only the power of the Holy Spirit complete with signs and wonders can penetrate the final frontiers. Our war is not with people but with demonic spirits who hold people captive. Our weapon is aggressive love, using God's power to demonstrate it.

Shibley encourages premillenialists to not argue over the rapture, but to expect Christ's return at anytime while getting on with the task of missions to hasten Christ's return. The prosperity message of the 1980s enables the church to have money for missions, though the emphasis then was a "greedy" message. Large funds will be needed, for any comprehensive strategy of evangelization must address the worldwide epidemics of disease, hunger, and literacy. "Jesus is acutely concerned with humanity's needs on every level."

Shibley emphasizes the need to listen and come to total dependence on the Spirit. He outlines a renewal strategy for missions and charismatic theology, concluding with suggestions on how to catch a world vision.

Harold Bauman, Goshen, Indiana, serves during retirement as teacher and consultant for Mennonite churches in North America. He and his wife, Elizabeth, were pastoral resources for the Dublin (Ireland) Mennonite Community from 1988-90.

Bad Samaritans: First World Ethics and Third World Debt. By Paul Vallely. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990, 374 pp., $10.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Carl Kreider

Countries of the third world are suffering under a crushing burden of debt. By lending money to third world borrowers, first world bankers and multinationals have acted as "bad Samaritans" rather than good. Most of the loans were made for projects of dubious value—often to build their military capabilities. The "structural adjustments" now demanded by the International Monetary Fund to enable the borrowers to repay loans with interest have inflicted untold hardships on the multitudes of poor people in the borrowing countries. The poor have been forced to produce products for export (usually at prices artificially depressed by first world tactics) rather than to provide food for their adequate nourishment.

The author is "not an economist or a theologian" but is rather an "award-winning British journalist." However, the bulk of the book treats issues which are both economic (often very complex ones) and theological. As an economist I cringe at some of the author's sweeping generalizations and oversimplifications, perhaps stemming from the fact that the book is a polemic. But it is a useful one. I find most of his judgments essentially correct and I believe the reader will gain much from his insights. The third world debt problem will never be solved until it is recognized to stem primarily from first world policies. Therefore sacrificial and drastic steps by first world lenders are required to solve it.

Carl Kreider, Goshen, Indiana, is an economist and Dean Emeritus of Goshen College.

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After reviewing the usability of the former style of index in Mission Focus, the format of indexing will change with this issue. The new style simply provides alphabetical listings for author and title. The indexes for volumes 1-10 can be found in the December 1982 issue; thereafter the index is updated in the December issue of each volume of *Mission Focus*.

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EDITORIAL

In January 1990 the media reported that India's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Devi Lal, had said in an interview that "Christians have no business in the country and should take off to where they belonged, America, England, or even Italy." India was for Hindus and no one else. Felix Wilfred uses this to introduce a discussion of this "embedded attitude among Asians that Christians in Asia are an alien body" (SEDOS, *Trends in Mission* [Orbis Books, 1991], p. 14). The Deputy Prime Minister chose to ignore the fact that there are Christians in India who trace their origins to the early years of the Christian era and who owe their existence, not to Europe, but to Asia. In addition, other religious minorities in India feel threatened by the majority. Felix Wilfred accepts this antagonistic outburst as proof of the rootlessness of the Christian faith in Asia. In other words, the Christian faith has not been contextualized in Asian cultures.

As the decade of the 1980s ended, we witnessed the collapse of a colossal historical experiment. It might be said that communism failed due to its inability to become contextualized. Every effort was made to assure the success of this experiment: a grand social vision, an elaborate theoretical foundation, a committed elite with a clear strategy that included the use of whatever power was necessary to achieve the goal. In the end, communism failed because it had to depend on coercion to gain and hold power; it proved no more successful than any other sociopolitical system in deploying power constructively, and it badly misjudged human nature.

Felix Wilfred argues for a new effort to achieve a fully contextualized church in Asia. In spite of the almost dizzying cultural diversities of Asia—indeed some question whether we dare even continue to use that term as though it signifies a social and historical unity—he uncritically assumes the Indian model to be normative for Asia. He characterizes Indian culture as inclusive and absorptive, open and fluid. He urges that contextualization must start with anthropology and end with theology rather than the reverse. The church ought to be formed from the sociohistorical materials at hand and be molded by the culture. Anthropology, following this lead, controls the outcome.

At another point in this SEDOS volume it is suggested there are two ways in which the gospel may be proclaimed: extension of the visible church by bringing people into it, or "allowing the power of the Gospel to encounter and move humanity in its struggles and diversity." It asserts that the first has to do with conversion and the second with dialogue. The latter stands for inculturation and liberation while the first represents imposition.

Two questions arise from this discussion: 1) How do we avoid reducing the gospel to that which is culturally approved? and 2) Does the goal of a contextualized gospel control the evangelization process? Fifteen hundred years of Christendom ought to be sufficient warning against an approach which subjugates the gospel to culture. The model against which all attempts at contextualizing the gospel of Jesus Christ must be measured is that of the incarnation. In the incarnation the gospel was fully vernacularized and communicated with idiomatic clarity. All classes of people understood it. Precisely because it was accessible to all, it aroused a range of reactions, including enraged rejection and demands for the death of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps there is another criterion to consider when we evaluate to what extent the gospel is contextualized in a particular culture: has it become the basis for the life of a people such that they are willing to lay down their lives for the sake of Jesus Christ? By that criterion, many followers of the way in Asia over the centuries have attested to their faith, hope, and love. The most recent large-scale example is that of Christians in China. Evangelization carried out in the spirit and manner of the incarnation will assuredly result in a contextualized faith. That will always entail the risk of martyrdom.

—Wilbert R. Shenk